

# Being-in-Light at the Early Modern and Reconstructed Theatres

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*For Mum*

# Abstract

*Being-in-Light* explores how people experienced light in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and to what extent these experiences impacted upon theatrical experience and practice in the period. Furthermore, it considers how reconstructions of early modern theatres (e.g. The Globe Theatre and Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (SWP)) deal with the disparity between early modern and contemporary experiences of light.

This thesis shifts critical focus away from the material study of light towards a phenomenological analysis of the experience of light. Crucially, light is not an object but a medium of perception: to see is to-be-in-light. The visual experiences of early modern theatre audiences were built on a history of inhabiting light in particular ways on a daily basis. These people spent roughly half their lives in darkness with only rudimentary artificial lights as a means to illuminate their immediate environments. Thus, in order to understand how early modern people saw in the theatres of the period, we must first of all examine how they experienced light on a daily basis.

The first part of the thesis focuses on early modern experiences of light. The opening chapter considers the daily habitats of light in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England—nocturnal, diurnal, and artificial—using examples from drama and other literature. Chapter 2 turns to light in the early modern theatres. It explores the “weather-world” of the early modern amphitheatres, before shifting focus towards the evidence for lighting at the indoor playhouses of the period. Following this analysis, Chapter 3 encompasses three case studies of early modern plays in which lighting plays a significant role. These case studies span a period of almost 30 years and show the evolution of stage lighting on the indoor English stage.

The second part of the thesis documents the author's eight-month research stay at Shakespeare's Globe in London. An introduction outlines the construction, design, repertoire and research focus of the SWP (a reconstructed Jacobean indoor playhouse opened in January 2014). Chapter 4 looks at general lighting practices in the candlelit SWP, comparing the use of stage chandeliers and handheld lighting instruments with evidence for lighting practices in the early modern indoor playhouses. The final chapter discusses the 2014 "Globe Outside In" experiment in which the Globe productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* were performed in the SWP for one and two nights respectively. This experiment enabled scholars to not only compare theatrical practices between the two theatres, but to also juxtapose the respective experiences of theatregoing at both theatres. The second part of the thesis concludes that early modern theatre scholars can open up a dialogue with the past by comparing theatrical practices at the Globe and SWP with those of the early modern theatres.

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# Introduction

## What is Light / Theatre?

HAMM: Is it night already then?

CLOV: [*looking*] No.

HAMM: Then what is it?

CLOV: [*looking*] Grey.

[*Lowering the telescope, turning towards Hamm, louder*]

Grey!

[*Pause. Still louder*]

GRREY!

[*Pause. He gets down, approaches Hamm from behind, whispers in his ear*]

HAMM: [*starting*] Grey! Did I hear you say grey?

CLOV: Light black. From pole to pole.

(Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*)<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

In early October 2014, I attended a performance called *Ring* at the Battersea Arts Centre in London. Written by Glen Neath and directed by David Rosenberg, the play took place in complete darkness with each audience member given headphones upon entering. Rows of seats were set up opposite one another, with a small gap in between them. The lights were on as we entered and an actor patrolled the space between the seats for a short period. After we took our seats and put on our headphones, the lights were slowly dimmed then turned off completely. I could see nothing: I was in complete darkness. About ten seconds later, the lights were abruptly turned back on. The actor told us that if we were not sure that we could sit for sixty minutes in

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Dramatic Works*, edited by Paul Auster and Edward Albee, Vol. 3 (New York: Grove Press, 2006). All references to *Endgame* are from this edition.

the darkness we had just experienced then we should leave. Although I knew beforehand that the show took place in darkness, I was suddenly anxious. Having briefly experienced this stygian darkness, I asked myself whether I could sit in it for an hour—I had no answer since I had never done so before. As darkness slowly descended once more, before engulfing the entirety of my visual field, I entered this environment anxious and insecure.

*Ring* used “binaural” recording, which creates 3D sound, meaning that sounds heard through the headphones occurred as if they were in the room. In fact, for the first ten minutes of the event, I was convinced that the sounds were actually in the room. Footsteps could be heard in the distance then approaching nearby, the (fictional) movement of chairs into a circle could be mapped across various parts of the theatrical space, and the voice of the actor who initially patrolled the room occasionally felt far away, nearby, to the left, right, in front or behind me. At one point, as it felt like he whispered in my right ear, I fully expected his hand to grasp me on the shoulder. I also wondered whether I was experiencing the same thing as everyone else.

Experiencing theatre and prolonged darkness in this way was thoroughly disconcerting, and quite terrifying. Yet for early modern people, the experience of prolonged darkness must have been an almost daily occurrence. Thomas Nashe, for instance, in a pamphlet entitled *The Terrors of the Night* (1594), wrote:

[S]o when Night in her rustie dungeon hath imprisoned our ey-sight, and that we are shut seperatly in our chambers from resort [...] The table of our hart is turned to an index of iniquities, and all our thoughts are nothing but texts to condemne vs. (B1v)

Similarly in the mid-seventeenth century, William Herbert observed:

Night is nothing, but th' absence of the Sun; and darknes, but the privation of light: yet when night comes, it brings with it a kind of feare; not to wild beasts, for then they walk to seek their prey; but unto man, whose conscience is guiltie of manie grievous sins, which come best to his mind, when he's alone and in the dark. (1657, 231)

Both Nashe and Herbert felt vulnerable in darkness, detached from the visible world that absorbed and stabilised their existence. Thoughts that roamed untroubled during daylight were suddenly of pressing and often alarming importance in darkness; noises that went unnoticed

during the day were often bloodcurdling at night. As I sat in darkness four centuries later, it was hard not to feel a semblance of the fear that permeated Nashe and Herbert's daily existence.

Nighttime in the early modern world placed fundamental restrictions on social interaction, productivity, and aroused strong feelings of vulnerability and fear. In his history of night in early modern Europe (2011), Craig Koslofsky notes that "all early modern Europeans experienced the night as a natural force, with little or no way to escape its constraints" (4). This experience is alien to most of us in the modern developed world. We enact a daily conversation with nighttime that allows us to interact, produce and function as we do during daylight hours. However, this experience of night is built upon our abilities to illuminate our surroundings artificially. We only have to look at the chaos that a blackout imposes on a modern metropolis to see that our relationship with night is very much dependent on electricity.

Daytime offered early modern Londoners the opportunity to see others, traverse their city, and watch entertainments such as bear-baiting and drama. In general, daytime brought people out into the open world. Nighttime, on the other hand, fundamentally inhibited travel and social interaction, with most people retreating home. Thus, the life stories of most early modern people were told in two broad chapters: the first was during the day amidst weather and daylight; the second was at home and in the dark. In the first chapter, people were social beings, happy to inhabit the outside world amidst the security of daylight. In the second chapter, people generally retreated, both physically and emotionally, into the attenuated world of the domestic. For the elite, however, who could afford to use artificial illumination, social intercourse at night was a form of conspicuous consumption.

\* \* \*

HAMM: Is it light?

CLOV: It isn't dark

HAMM: [*angrily*] I'm asking you is it light.

CLOV: Yes.

[*Pause*]

HAMM: The curtain isn't closed?

CLOV: No.

HAMM: What window is it?

CLOV: The earth.

HAMM: I knew it!

[*Angrily*]

But there's no light there! The other!

[*Clov pushes chair towards window left*]

The earth!

[*Clov stops the chair under window left. Hamm tilts back his head*]

That's what I call light!

(Beckett, *Endgame*)

\* \* \*

## What is Light?

In his comprehensive study of lighting on the Shakespearean stage (1999), R. B. Graves notes:

[L]ight remains one of the most enduring elements in our reconstructions, because the daylight that illuminated the Globe stage is the same daylight that we enjoy and have at our disposal to know and study. In daylight, we have the actual 'material' that Shakespeare and his contemporaries employed in their theatre. (2–3)

It is easy to see Graves' point. Surely the daylight that illuminated the Globe playhouse at the turn of the seventeenth century was more or less the same daylight that illuminates the current reconstruction on London's South Bank. "If we shift our historical inquiries away from the theatre building, its stage, and physical properties," writes Graves, "it is not because lighting is more important. Rather, it is because light possesses unique value for us as a kind of evidence that will last until the crack of gloom" (1999, 9). Essentially Graves argues that light is eternal—as long as there has been life there has been light. Thus, time is the only thing that separates present-day experiences of the light from the experiences of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Ostensibly, light appears the most stable material in the transition between then and now.

Yet Graves' conception of light as a "material" fails to deal with how human beings actually experience light. Light is not an object but a *medium* of perception; it is not something that we see, but something that enables us to see (Ingold 2011, 136-38). This distinction is crucial because, strictly speaking, we cannot "know and study" light in the same way that we study the various objects that have become the focus of the ever-expanding field of material culture. We cannot hold light in our hands, sit on it, or turn it around. Light has no mass, no sides, no front or back, no start or end, no neat distinction between it and us. We are never outside of light observing the extent of its shape or size. Rather, light requires immersion: to see is to-be-in-light. "Visual space," Alphonso Lingis notes, "is not pure transparency; it is filled with light. [...] Our gaze is immersed in it and sees with its cast" (1998, 13). Thus, in order to understand what light really is, we must "know and study" it from the inside.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold argues that one way to study light from the inside is to compare the relationship of light and vision to that of sound and hearing. "We say that we hear sounds," writes Ingold, "as though we were bathed in them. They get inside us, and shake us up. Indeed, hearing and the experience of sound appear to be one and the same. But if that is so, why cannot vision equally be an experience of *light*?" (2011, 128; original emphasis). He continues, "sound, I would argue, is not the object but the medium of our perception. It is what we hear *in*. Similarly, we do not see light but see *in* it" (2011, 138; original emphasis). Sense perception is thus immanent to immersion in the environment.

Ingold's anthropology follows in the footsteps of phenomenology, and in particular, the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Ontology is tantamount to immersion, according to Merleau-Ponty, because our body is always submersed in the environment. He notes in the preface to *Phenomenology of Perception* (2010[1962]) that "the world is not what I think, but what I live through. I am open to the world, I have no doubt that I am in communication with it, but I do not possess it; it is inexhaustible" (xviii–xix). Every time we open our eyes, we are in communication with light. Yet as Merleau-Ponty implies, in opening ourselves up to the world of light, we do not



own and master it in an attempt to direct the conversation in whatever direction we choose. Rather, we give ourselves over to the continual fluctuations of the medium. “Immersed in the visible by his body,” Merleau-Ponty writes, “the see-er does not appropriate what he sees; he merely approaches it by looking, he opens himself to the world” (1964, 162). In vision, we do not project significance onto the exterior world, nor does it simply give meaning into our interior world in an endless to and fro of cause and effect, in which light acts as the go-between. Rather, in the act of seeing, we inhabit light. As we do so, our visual experience is entangled amongst the variants of light and shade. The same was true for Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

As early modern people inhabited various environments in the period, they opened themselves up to the mediums of light, sound, touch and so on. In doing so, they made irrevocable connections with the world, which continually determined what it meant to see, hear, and feel. Ingold argues:

We *inhabit* our environment: we are part of it; and through this practice of habitation it becomes part of us too. We see with eyes trained on our experience of watching what is going on around us, hear with ears tuned by the sounds that matter to us, and touch with bodies that have become accustomed, by the lives we lead, to certain kinds of movement. (2011, 95; original emphasis).

If we share anything with Shakespeare and his contemporaries, as Graves suggests with daylight, it is the fact that they too inhabited the environment in such a way that it became inextricably part of their daily existence. To treat light as one of several materials in the early modern playhouses, therefore, is to tell only part of the story of visual perception for early modern people. In the first part of this thesis, I explore the rest of the story. I consider how early modern people saw *in* light, how they were immersed in it, and how light got inside them and shook them up.

### ***Seeing* versus Vision: Material and Visual Culture**

Over the course of the last three decades, early modern scholarship has undergone what could be described as a “material turn” (Dustagheer 2013). However, as James A. Knapp and Jeffrey

Pence argue that “[t]he turn toward history—toward the material, or the thing—does not so much settle the problems that concerned theory as attempt to evade them.” They continue, “[t]he succession of New Historicism by even more strictly materialist approaches raises a concern that the gains of the previous historical turn may have resulted in an idealization of its object, the thing” (2003, 642–43). If New Historicism is concerned with the social and cultural forces that shaped subjectivity, then the turn to material culture attempts to redress the balance between subjectivity and objectivity. In the introduction to a collection of essays entitled *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (1996), for instance, the editors ask, “in the period that has from its inception been identified with the emergence of the subject, where is the object? (De Grazia, Quilligan, Stallybrass, 2). In the subsequent two decades, the object responded with gusto.<sup>2</sup> In fact, in the introduction to *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (2009), Jonathan Gil Harris goes as far as to say that “for a growing number of Renaissance and Shakespeare scholars, the play is not the thing: the *thing* is the thing” (1; original emphasis).

Recently, Henry S. Turner has challenged the turn towards the material culture in early modern theatre scholarship by arguing that these studies “tended to overlook the fact that theatre is only ever partly ‘material’” (2012, 33). Like Turner, I also fear that making “the *thing* the thing” borders on committing what Merleau-Ponty describes as the “experience error,” in which “[w]e make perception out of things perceived.” Merleau-Ponty argues that “[w]e are caught up in the world and we do not succeed in extricating ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of the world” (2010, 6). What people experienced in the early modern theatres was not materials, but the environment in which these materials were immersed. Different things had different meanings to early modern people because these materials had particular social and cultural significances. But early modern people, first and foremost, had to experience these things, which

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<sup>2</sup> I want to note a few significant studies in material culture, without listing this body of the vast extent of literature: Lisa Jardine, *Wordly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 1996); Lena Orlin (ed.), *Material London, ca. 1600* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Curtis Perry (ed.), *Material Culture and Cultural Materialisms in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000); Jonathan Gil Harris “Shakespeare’s Hair: Staging the Object of Material Culture,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52 (4) (2001); Catherine Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

required inhabitation in the mediums of the environment. Ingold notes that “[i]n the world of solid objects envisaged by material-culture theorists, the flux of materials is stifled and stilled. In such a world, wherein all that is material is locked up in things, it would be impossible to breathe” (2011, 28). Like us, early modern people needed to breathe in order to live.

One way to combat the “stifled and stilled” world of material culture is to think about sense perception as something that we *do*, rather than something that happens to us. For Merleau-Ponty, this experience is a fundamental aspect of embodiment, as he writes that “[m]y body is wherever there is something to be done,” he writes (2010, 291). Similarly, Ingold argues that “I *am* what I am doing” (2011, 17; original emphasis). Throughout this thesis, therefore, I refrain from using the terms “sight” or “vision” to describe visual experience. Rather, I talk about *seeing*. I do this for two reasons. Firstly, although gerunds are often considered the weakest and least concrete form of a verb, they can be extremely effective in attending to the open-endedness of doing something. “I see,” for instance, performs a different function to “I am seeing.” The former implies that the physical act is complete. The latter, however, suggests that the act is still in process. This open-endedness is particularly important when we think of the relationship between light and vision. If to see is to-be-in-light, then see-*ing* keeps the see-er open to the world, allowing light to continually determine and re-determine visual experience. Thus, visual experience is a single unceasing action, rather than a series of interrelated events.

The second reason why I use the term “seeing” is in response to a book entitled *The Visual Culture Reader* (1998). As a hefty collection of essays by philosophers, art historians, and cultural theorists, it sets out to explore “the centrality of visual experience in everyday life” (Mirzoeff, 7). I find it curious, therefore, that there are but three references to light in the book. If “visual culture” is concerned with visual experience, as this book proposes, then how can the one medium that makes vision possible remain largely absent from its study? One thing to conclude from this absence is that visual culture and seeing are seemingly distinct practices, a point that Ingold makes. “The ‘visual,’ in these studies,” he writes, “appears to have little or

nothing to do with that it means to be able to see. That is to say, it scarcely deals with the phenomenon of light. It is rather about the relations between objects, images and their interpretations” (2011, 136). If seeing is determined by the ebb and flow of immersion in light, then studies of visual culture stem this flow. They demand that rather than continually shaping the possibility of visual perception, light serves to connect observers and objects in order to create “visual experience,” in much the same way that early modern people believed vision was made possible by light emanating either from the eye or the object of vision (Clark 2007). Such an approach to vision, I argue, is akin to closing our eyes in order to see, as Shakespeare describes in the opening line to Sonnet 43—“When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see” (1). Consequently, sight becomes about the contemplation of static images rather than the fluidity of dynamic occurrences, like a cartoon strip in which images enfold into the next in order to create a seemingly linear experience.

In an article for *Literature Compass* surveying current scholarship on Shakespeare and early modern visual culture, Chloe Porter suggests that “[t]he potential for new research in this area [early modern visual culture] ... is very promising, with approaches that engage with questions of materiality seeming to present particularly fruitful avenues of enquiry” (2011, 547–48).<sup>3</sup> Porter also notes:

At its broadest, this phrase [“visual culture”] can refer to anything which is seen [...] Visual culture can therefore include any aspect of what might be termed “the visual world,” from building exteriors and interiors, to gardens, clothing, cosmetics, or any material objects from books and furniture to tools and mechanical implements. (2011, 546)

The close relationship between material and visual culture can be explained rather simply: they are both about “things.” Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse suggest that early modern visual culture concerns “[t]he artifacts and social practices that make up the potential subject matter of the field [of early modern visual culture].” These include “things made solely to be seen, such as painting

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<sup>3</sup> There is a large literature on early modern visual culture and some of the most notable studies (not discussed above) are: Clare Farago (ed.), *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1540–1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Alison Thorne, *Vision and Rhetoric in Shakespeare: Looking Through Language* (Houndsmill: Macmillan, 2000); Richard Meek, *Narrating the Visual in Shakespeare* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

and sculpture, but also things made to be used while being seen, such as maps, fabrics, and architecture,” as well as culturally-determined “ritual and spectacle” and “sites of spectacle, such as the stage, the gallery, and the public square.” Most importantly, they argue that the study of early modern visual culture encompasses “the technologies of seeing, such as mapping, surveying, anatomizing, and gazing, the exhibitionist technologies of self-display” (2000, 2). I find it somewhat odd that light is not included in this list of “technologies of seeing,” since light is the underlying “technology” of all visual experience. I find this scholarly symbiosis between material and visual culture somewhat troubling. Somehow “anything which is seen” has become equated with the experience of seeing. Yet throughout the vast literature on early modern visual culture there is very little written about how early modern people inhabited light and saw “with its cast,” to use Lingis’s words.

Most of these studies of visual culture suggest that visual experience rests solely in the material world; that is, in the objects of vision. Ingold suggests these theorists make a mistake in doing so. He writes that “[t]he mistake [that visual culture theorists make] is to imagine that vision proceeds along a one-way chain of connections starting with the material objects and ending with their representation as images in the mind” (2005, 99). The turn towards the materiality of the early modern theatre risks making the mistake that Ingold describes here. Of course, these theatres were filled with materials and objects that had certain cultural significance, but the visual experience of these objects did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, every early modern experience took place in a specific lighting environment that determined the things people saw and as a result, the meanings they garnered from the experience. Moreover, these experiences built on a history of inhabiting light in particular ways on a daily basis. Early modern people spent roughly half their lives in darkness with only rudimentary artificial lights as a means to illuminate their immediate environments, as I shall discuss in Chapter 1. These daily experiences must have affected how they saw in the theatres of the period.

The eyes may be the bodily instrument through which we see, and the materials of the world may be what we see. But crucially, the eyes are lodged in a human body, which, along with the objects of vision, is immersed in an environment. Ingold argues, for instance:

[V]ision is not a one-way process leading from worldly object to mental image, by way of the eyes and the brain, but rather unfolds in circuits of action and perception, without beginning or end, that are set up through the placement of the perceiver from the outset as a being *in* the world. (2005, 99; original emphasis)

In the same way that respiration is an unceasing process of inhalation and exhalation of air, vision is a continually evolving consequence of the human body's immersion in light. Thus, in the act of sight, we are not making direct contact with things themselves. Rather, we are, first and foremost, experiencing light; it is the terms of our immersion in light that determines the things that we see—the same was true for audiences at the early modern theatres.

\* \* \*

CLOV: I see my light dying.

HAMM: Your light dying! Listen to that! Well, it can die just as well here, *your* light. Take a look at me and then come back and tell me what you think of *your* light.

(Beckett, *Endgame*)

\* \* \*

## Historical Phenomenology

Merleau-Ponty and other twentieth-century phenomenologists have increasingly found their way into early modern studies, particularly since the development of a strand of scholarship known as “historical phenomenology.” The term was initially coined by Bruce R. Smith in an article entitled “Premodern Sexualities” (2000). Since then, historical phenomenology has expanded its reach into most areas of early modern studies. The extent to which historical phenomenology has infiltrated early modern scholarship is reflected in a special issue of the journal *Criticism* devoted to essays on the topic of “Shakespeare and Phenomenology.” In the introduction to this issue, Keith Curran and James Kearney note that “feeling and sensing have a history.” They continue to

define historical phenomenology broadly as “the study of sense experience during a specific historical past” (2012, 354). Likewise, in the introduction to her study of emotions in early modern culture (2004), Gail Kern Paster

look[s] for traces of a historical phenomenology in the language of affect in early modern drama in order that readers of that drama and other texts of the period may begin to recover the historical particularity of early modern self-experience. (23)

Similarly for Smith, historical phenomenology recognises “the ambient quality of knowing-in-place-in-time” (Smith 2009, 8). Smith mirrors Merleau-Ponty’s expression that “all knowledge takes place within the horizons opened up by perception” (2010, 241), when he suggests that the theory of historical phenomenology can be condensed into one simple axiom: “all knowledge comes about within a particular configuration of space, time, and body” (2009, 255). The experiences of early modern people were thus specific to the spatiotemporal events in which these people were immersed.

Importantly, historical phenomenology conflates the binary between subject and object—or observer and observed—that dominates studies of material and visual culture, respectively. Curran and Kearney suggest that “historical phenomenology ... embraces the dynamism and nebulousness of feeling and sensation by thinking in terms of ecologies rather than artifacts, experiences rather than objects, and by abandoning neat distinctions between persons and things” (2012, 354). Similarly, Smith argues that “my knowledge of the world about me is more nuanced, more responsible to the other inhabitants of that world, and hence more livable when I stop drawing lines between subject and object” (2009, 124). Historical phenomenology does not doubt the existence of subjects and objects, but suggests that the world of meaning is much larger than the materials that occupy it. “For [Shakespeare] and his contemporaries,” Smith notes, “coming-to-know may have started as something external and immaterial and ended as something internal and immaterial, but in between was something that partook of both” (2010, 35). The “in between,” I argue, was the environment, for it was the mediums of perception—the

air people felt in, the sound they heard in, and the light they saw in—that determined how early modern people came to know anything.

In his study of the colour green in early modern culture, Smith argues that “[h]istorical phenomenology offers a way of restoring two things that have been lost from criticism since the 1970s: sense experience and emotional response” (2009, 40). Essentially, historical phenomenology encompasses both the worlds of rigorous historicism and contemporary theory. Historical phenomenology thus enables us to pay attention to the material reality of historical worlds as well as explore how people may have actually experienced these worlds—a point that Smith makes:

It is the shadow of the present cast back into the past as well as the analyst’s orientation towards the future that makes it possible for historical phenomenology to stay rooted in the concerns, political commitments, and cognitive research of the present at the same time that it tries to make sense of the past, in the past’s own terms. (2010, 37)

Following Smith’s model, I make use of the work of Ingold and Merleau-Ponty throughout this thesis, while simultaneously analysing what early modern people had to say about their environments. I suggest that through understanding how we inhabit light, we can approach how early modern people inhabited the lighting environments of their particular time and place, especially their theatres.

### **Theatrical Space**

When early modern people attended the early modern theatres, they brought with them an embodied history of experiencing light in specific ways on a daily basis. This history permeated their gaze, informing everything that they saw. However, these people were also affected by the immediate environments of these theatre spaces. Therefore, what happened to people when they inhabited the lighting environments of the early modern theatres? In order to answer this question, we must first of all define what we mean by theatre “space.” Gay McAuley points out that “in order for performer and spectator to come together, to be present to each other, there



must be a space of some sort” (1999, 3). For a long time, this space was taken for granted in performance studies as the focus lay primarily on textual analysis and historicism. However, more recently, as documented by Sarah Dustagheer (2013), early modern theatre scholarship has benefitted from the “spatial turn” in the humanities.<sup>4</sup> The primary reason behind this turn in performance studies is the fact that, to use Jacalyn Royce’s words, “physical space has consequences” (2009, 480). Since the scope of this literature is so vast, I will not attempt a complete survey of it here, other than to look at a few relevant examples. Janette Dillon, for instance, in *The Language of Space in Court Performance* (2010) argues:

Each spatial arrangement and utterance outlined below has microcosmic relevance to the bigger political picture. How a person sits, stands, or otherwise occupies a given space, how he or she moves into, around or through that space is meaningful; it speaks of social and political status, relationship and agenda. (17)

The ways in which people inhabit space taps into a rich history of social, cultural, and political meaning. Thus, to occupy any space is to insert oneself into a world already imbued with meaning, and every movement or action either speaks to or subverts normative spatial practices. In *Playing Spaces in Early Women’s Drama* (2006), Alison Findlay notes that although theatrical space has certain social and cultural significance, its meaning is also temporary and representational:

[A] performance space is both a representation of space (a critical, creative intervention into spatial texture which imposes an order) and a representational space, lived through its associations and images. It is, moreover, a space that is produced to be read and lived, at least temporarily, by the spectators and the actors. (10)

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<sup>4</sup> Other important studies of spatial theory in relation to the early modern theatre include: Emrys Jones, *Scenic Form in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988); Janette Dillon, *Theatre, Court and City, 1595–1610: Drama and Social Space in London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Russell West, *Spatial Representations and the Jacobean Stage: From Shakespeare to Webster* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); J. D. Hopkins, *City/Stage/Globe: Performance and Space in Shakespeare’s London* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Jean Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598–1642* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). Another important addition to this field was Robert Weimann’s concept of “*locus*” (“what and who was represented in the dramatic world”) and “*platea*” (“what and who was representing that world”). In short, the “*locus*” was the intention of the dramatist in his text, and “*platea*” was the interpretation of the actors performing the text. These two terms came together to create theatrical space in the early modern period—Robert Weimann, “Bifold Authority in Shakespeare’s Theatre.” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39 (4) (1988): 401–17.

In a similar vein to Findlay, Tim Fitzpatrick, in *Playwright, Space and Place in Early Modern Performance* (2011), argues that “a relational spatial system has implications for broader patterns of meaning-making, that space and spatial patterns can be used to make thematic meanings” (5). What occurred then in early modern theatrical production was a representation of actual space, the environments that people inhabited on a daily basis.

Part of the allure of theatre is its continual ability to create meaning through the appropriation of performance space by fictional space. While the physical structure of theatre always remains, what it serves to represent is always in flux (Smith 2013, 34). Turner, for instance, discusses how an object on stage is a “representation of a fictive object in the sense that it corresponds to that object in structure but does not correspond at all points in detail to the fictive object that it represents.” He continues, “this iconicity, fundamental to stage performance, is precisely what enables theatre to become a practical epistemology: a way of coming to knowledge through representation” (2006, 27). To experience space, according to these scholars, is to *read* it and to extract meaning in the process. In this sense, these scholars practice what we could loosely term “spatial geography,” where signs of shared cultural practices, both explicit and implicit, are encoded in space.

Much of this scholarship is influenced by the spatial theories of Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre, Gaston Bachelard, Michel Foucault, and Jürgen Habermas. Paul Yachnin suggests that before the works of these theorists “[t]o speak of ‘social space’ ... would have sounded strange.” He argues that through the ideas posited by the theorists above, we have come to understand that “space [is] not something given, but [is] rather something made by human collectivities, the built environment, forms of discourse, and social relations and practices” (2012, 147). In short, these theorists understand space by how it is used, which “reveal[s] insights into a particular society at any given time” (Dustagheer 2013, 570). Following this logic, in order to understand early modern theatrical space, we should explore how actors, audiences, dramatists, and architects talked about, used, and imagined theatre spaces in the period—not to mention the implicit spatial

practices present in playtext. Accordingly, these practices serve to reflect the culture in which they were produced. “[S]patiality,” Yachnin tells us, “is both an almost invisible instrument of power (invisible, of course, because it envelops those it subjects) and also a changeable, contested, and creative property of social life broadly considered” (2012, 148). Space, in this sense, carries meaning in its materiality; that is, the things that occupy space tell us about the people and practices that happen there.

The study of representational space and spatial practices has been a welcome addition to the field of early modern studies. But this scholarship tends to suggest that meaning-making occurs not in the process of inhabiting an environment, but rather in what these inhabitations serve to represent. I employ, instead, a spatial theory that incorporates the incipience of things in space. For Merleau-Ponty, “[s]pace is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the position of things becomes possible” (2010, 284). Things, in this sense, are not simply in space, but *with* space, continually emerging in the midst of light, sound, and other mediums of perception. In a similar vein, Ingold writes that “the open world that creatures inhabit is not prepared for them in advance. It is continually coming into being around them” (2011, 117). Perception, both Ingold and Merleau-Ponty imply, is not direct experience of things themselves, but things as they have been brought to bear by the environment in which they are immersed. Lingis similarly argues:

The ground upon which light, darkness, air, heat, cold, humidity, and aridity extend is not observed as things are observed, and we do not lift or hold it. It is there as a surface over an unarticulated depth, a density supporting the weight of things in their places. (2012, 43)

What we experience in space, therefore, are the forces that bring things to our attention; we experience the weight of the world through the mediums of light, sound, air, and so on.

Michael Witmore puts forward a promising model of theatre by following a similar conception of space to Merleau-Ponty and Ingold. Resisting “punctualist” metaphysics, in which experience is “localised in certain metaphysically isolated pockets of the universe” (2008, 1),

Witmore posits a more energetic version of theatrical experience. Instead of objects, materials, and interpretations, Witmore discusses “eventualities.” “If we say theatre is eventual,” he writes, “we mean that an entire performance has the quality of an event rather than an action: it ‘comes about’ in ‘the way things come about’—which is to say, in an ensemble” (2013, 387). The idea that theatre is a space where things “come about,” echoes both Merleau-Ponty and Ingold’s versions of space. In doing so, Witmore highlights the limitations of viewing theatrical practices as deliberate manipulations of space:

To the extent that theatre still deploys space in deliberate ways, relying on productive arrangements of bodies to generate the experience we partake of as actors or audience members, theatre remains an art of contingency—an art of placing individuals in a position where the *most* they can do is see, sense, hear, and feel, rather than foresee, grasp, and know. (2013, 389; original emphasis)

In this sense, Witmore implies that although theatre attempts to imbue space with representational meaning, it can only do so to a certain degree. Its inhabitants, both human and material, are immersed in an environment that theatre practices cannot control—the *open* world. Instead of thinking of theatre as a space where things come together to produce certain experiences, encoded with cultural significance, Witmore argues theatre is a space where things emerge as significant from the general activity of the events occurring in the environments of these spaces. Essentially, Witmore suggests that theatre is not an exact science, and the experience of it cannot be predicted in advance. The fact that the people involved in the making of theatre are immersed in incessantly altering mediums of perception, such as light and sound, means that theatre will always remain, to use Witmore’s words, “an art of contingency” (2013, 386).

### **What is a Theatrical Convention?**

If theatre is an “art of contingency,” in which audience response cannot be predicted in advance, then how does that affect the ways in which we discuss “theatrical conventions”? For Raymond Williams, a theatrical convention “is simply the terms upon which author, performers, and

audience agree to meet” (1968, 12). Although this model may at times appear simplistic, it is a useful starting point. Williams, however, misses a fundamental aspect of convention, and that is the theatre building itself. Authors, performers, and audiences need a meeting place if they are to come to any sort of agreement. Yet, undeniably, there are certain boundaries within which the combination of author, performers, and audience agree to meet. For example, in the early modern indoor playhouses, lighting practices were restricted to the affordances of daylight and candlelight. There were certain things that candlelight could not do that modern lighting can. For instance, it would have been very difficult to create spotlighting in the early modern playhouses. Moreover, it would have been almost impossible to quickly darken and brighten the stage, since such an effect required the extinguishing and relighting of candles. The capabilities of early modern lighting practices, therefore, were determined by the materiality of the utensils involved in its production.

I do not doubt that the early modern theatre had certain conventions, particularly when it came to lighting. I agree with Fitzpatrick when he notes:

While there were no formal organizational structures that united the playwrights of the time, and standardized their writing practices and the ways in which they projected performances through their texts, nevertheless there is a real sense in which they shared a set of fundamental agreements as to how performance would be organized. (2011, 2)

Yet Fitzpatrick also argues that “[c]onventions are not fixed and automatically applicable, and there are a number of factors that will govern their application in particular performances in particular spaces and times” (2011, 2). In this sense, conventions are essentially generalisations, normative practices that hold performances together but require little explanation on the part of the actors or the audience. But, as Turner notes, “[l]ike all acts of generalization [...] ‘theatricality’ should be understood as retaining a certain plasticity as it expands and contracts within certain limits” (2013, 4). Although conventions are essentially implicit agreements between the people involved in the making of theatre, they are not truisms, nor are they immutable.

Instead of “retaining a certain plasticity” that Turner calls for, some studies of early modern theatrical conventions have become somewhat ossified, mainly due to a Shakespeare-centric approach. When Graves argues, for example, that “no playtexts” suggest experimentation with light (1999, 197), he seems to neglect plays by Shakespeare’s contemporaries, such as *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, *Catiline*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Antonio’s Revenge*, or *The Second’s Maiden’s Tragedy*, to name but a few. In a similar vein, Andrew Gurr tends to make Shakespeare the norm and other dramatists the exception. He argues that “[t]he Shakespeareans were against illusionism,” gathering all early modern theatre practitioners, including audiences, under the banner of Shakespeare (2009, 7). Of course there is nothing wrong with focusing on Shakespeare per se, but it is problematic to equate early modern theatrical convention solely with Shakespeare because, as Williams suggests, convention exists in the agreement of author, performers, and audience. What if the combination is not Shakespeare, King’s Men, and Globe, but Marston, Children of Paul’s, and Paul’s Playhouse, or Ford, Queen Henrietta’s Men, and the Cockpit, or Beaumont, Children of the Queen’s Revels, and the Blackfriars?<sup>5</sup> Surely each of these combinations produces its own conventions within the overall possibilities of theatre in the period. Fitzpatrick argues:

[C]onventions are not enforceable, and are open to constant renegotiation as historical, social and cultural contexts change. A generally accepted set of conventions that governed how space and place could be represented in performance by deploying the resources generally available in the playhouses would have been drawn on and deployed differently and to different degrees by a range of playwrights writing for a range of different theatre spaces (possibly with slightly different resources) in different periods. (2011, 2–3)

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<sup>5</sup> Same fantastic work has been done on the various repertories of the early modern playing companies that challenges the dominance of Shakespeare and the King’s Men in current scholarship. These works include: W. Reaveley Gair, *The Children of Paul’s: The Story of a Theatre Company, 1553–1608* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Roslyn L. Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare’s Company, 1594–1613* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991), and *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare’s London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) Lucy Munro, *The Children of the Queen’s Revels: A Jacobean Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen’s Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Tom Rutter, “Repertory Studies: A Survey,” *Shakespeare*, 4.3: 336–50; Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare’s Opposites: The Admiral’s Company 1594–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Eva Griffith, *A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse: The Queen’s Servants at the Red Bull Theatre (c. 1605–1619)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean, *Lord Strange’s Men and their Plays* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

Perhaps Shakespeare and the King's Men did not experiment with light, but that is not to say that Ford or Marston and their respective playing companies did not. Perhaps audiences going to see Shakespeare did not expect to see illusions, but perhaps audiences going to a Webster play might have. In this sense, I tend to follow Alan C. Dessen's claim that "we have no way of knowing how much we do not know" (1984, 8).

Although both Gurr and Graves's studies are remarkable in their own right, they reach somewhat concrete conclusions about early modern lighting practices, free of the plasticity that Turner calls for. Importantly, theatrical convention was continually evolving over the early modern period. As the conventions of outdoor playing made their way into the indoor playhouses, particularly after the adult companies acquired these spaces, the conventions of indoor playing transferred onto the outdoor stage as well. Since the various early modern companies were not only talented but also competitive, it seems to me likely that they would have explored the various possibilities of the playing spaces they respectively occupied. Moreover, as Fitzpatrick argues, "playwrights were aware of the set of performance resources available to them, and were writing with foresight to inscribe them in their texts" (2011, 5). Perhaps some dramatists wrote lighting considerations into their plays and perhaps some playing companies experimented with light.

Conventions are always in flux within the boundaries of possibility. If it was possible to experiment with light, as it would have been at the indoor playhouses in the early modern period, then there is no reason to presume that no performances ever experimented with light. These experiments may not have been performed regularly, but that does not mean they did not occur at all. I define convention, then, as the result of the specific combinations of authors, performers, audiences, and playhouses bound by the material possibilities of these combinations. We find that some conventions occur regularly across several different combinations. We also find that some conventions are specific to particular combinations. Over time, some conventions that were once idiosyncratic become generalised practices and vice versa. The idiosyncrasy of inter-act

entertainments at the indoor playhouses in the early Jacobean period, for example, eventually became a general (but not universal) practice at the outdoor playhouses later in the period. Whereas light was most often a signifier of location and time in the plays of the early 1600s, by the 1630s light had become a fundamental dramaturgical device, as I shall discuss in the case studies of Chapter 3. Instead of searching for the rigid rules that governed each and every theatrical performance in the early modern period, I want to think about the fluidity of conventions in the early modern theatres. That is, how specific combinations of dramatists, performers, audiences and playhouses created their own particular versions of theatrical convention.

\* \* \*

HAMM: Is Mother Pegg's Light on?

CLOV: Light! How could anyone's light be on?

HAMM: Extinguished!

CLOV: Naturally it's extinguished. If it's not on it's extinguished.

HAMM: No, I mean Mother Pegg.

CLOV: But naturally she's extinguished!

(Beckett, *Endgame*)

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## **The Structure of the Thesis**

### **Part 1: Being-in-Light at the Early Modern Theatres**

The first part of my thesis explores what being-in-light meant to early modern people at their various theatres. I argue that, first of all, we should consider how people inhabited light on a daily basis in early modern England as every visual experience in the theatres was conditioned by these daily experiences. My experience of "brightness," for example, is formed by my history of



inhabiting readily available and easily adjustable artificial lighting on a regular basis. Brightness for me is relative to the illuminative possibilities of electric light. For early modern people, however, ideas of brightness emerged from inhabiting a world with no street lighting, limited and unreliable artificial lighting, and a natural cycle of light and dark. Thus, what may have been bright for an early modern person may well seem quite dark to me.

The focus of Chapter 1 falls on environments of light in early modern England—nocturnal, diurnal, and artificial—using examples from drama and other literature. Nighttime was an extremely affective medium for early modern people, as Roger A. Ekirch notes in his historiography of nighttime (2005). “Darkness in the early modern world,” he writes, “summoned the worst elements in man, nature, and the cosmos” (6). The natural light of daytime, in comparison, brought with it a certain sense of security and relief. The onset of darkness aroused strong feelings of anxiety, and people who regularly inhabited nighttime were treated with a great deal of suspicion. These people were regularly known as “night-walkers,” and I examine what exactly it meant to walk at night in the period. Drawing on both early modern depictions of walking and modern theory on the practice of walking, I suggest that by walking in darkness, early modern people gathered a form of kinesthetic knowledge about nighttime that informed their conceptions of night more generally.

Yet despite nighttime’s oppressiveness, it could also be a great liberating force, freeing people from the restrictive nature of social oversight in the period. I explore the various groups of people who enjoyed or benefitted from the dark hours. To counteract darkness, people had few options. Artificial light was limited to flame-based technologies, with access to these often determined by social rank. Wealthier people could afford finer materials for candles and the like, and when they were outdoors at night, they often had servants lighting the environment for them. Thus, nighttime was not experienced as a universal phenomenon. Although it seems fair to say that most people feared the onset of night, some people had better means to combat the darkness than others.

For people who were accustomed to a dark environment at nighttime, the theatre opened up at night as a visual phenomenon where actors displayed the normally hidden effects of darkness. In Chapter 2, I compare the relationship between actual inhabitations of nighttime with its portrayal on both the outdoor and indoor early modern stage. In order to do so, I first consider what kind of light existed in these theatres. Starting with the amphitheatres, where performances took place in the afternoon, I explore what happens to sense perception when we inhabit the outdoors. Rather than viewing the weather as the “conditions” for things to exist in at these playhouses, I consider how the weather actually brought about the experience of these things. Furthermore, I examine how seeing the same play in different weather conditions could dramatically change its reception.

If to go to the early modern amphitheatres was to inhabit the weather, then seeing a play in the indoor playhouses was to inhabit a space free from the variables of the atmosphere. Whereas the medium of vision in the outdoor theatres was always natural light, the indoor playhouses were illuminated by both natural and artificial light. With scholars unable to agree on the ratio between daylight and candlelight in these playhouses, I explore current scholarship on theatre lighting. I also discuss the composition of early modern window glass and how it may have affected the amount of light that entered these venues. I present, as a result, two broad hypotheses for lighting at the indoor playhouses: first, that they were illuminated by natural and artificial light that remained consistent throughout; second, that playing companies experimented with light by shuttering windows and extinguishing candles. I understand that perhaps both hypotheses are incorrect, or perhaps they are both right, but I speculate that the real answer is less fixed than we may imagine. I finish the chapter with a discussion of how night scenes may have differed between the outdoor and indoor stage, and in what ways these scenes may have related to actual inhabitations of nighttime in the period.

I conclude the first part of my thesis with a chapter looking at relationship between light and the dramaturgy of certain plays in the early modern period. The first of these case studies is a

comparison of John Webster's *The White Devil* at the outdoor Red Bull in 1612 and *The Duchess of Malfi* at the indoor Blackfriars in 1613. Webster blames the former's lack of success on the fact that "it was acted in so dull a time of Winter, presented in so open and blacke a Theater," as well as the "ignorant asses" that made up the Red Bull audience (1612, A1v). Although it is obviously unwise to take Webster at his word here, I compare what it may have been like to see *The White Devil* amidst the weather of the Red Bull playhouse in comparison to *The Duchess of Malfi* at the indoor and candlelit environment of the Blackfriars. I then draw on my discussion of night-walking from Chapter 1 by comparing how Flamineo (*The White Devil*) and Ferdinand (*The Duchess of Malfi*) inhabit nighttime. I follow this discussion with a comparison of the performance of night-walking on the outdoor and indoor stages.

The second case study looks at what may have been one of the earliest examples of light experimentation in early modern commercial drama: John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* at Paul's Playhouse in 1600. Performed by the Children of Paul's at the playhouse inside the precinct of St. Paul's cathedral, much of Marston's revenge tragedy takes place at night, with the action continually calling for entrances with handheld lighting instruments. I initially consider *Antonio's Revenge* in relation to Marston's other plays performed at Paul's playhouse, particularly *Antonio and Mellida*. I consider how the revenge tragedy creates different "eventualities" to plays in other spaces. Secondly I explore the role of the Pages in the play. These characters have very little dialogue, but they often enter scenes with lights and occupy the stage for long periods. Finally, I look at the relationship between the Pages and the Ghost of Andrugio, suggesting that the role of the Pages was preparatory for the several entrances of the ghost in the third act.

In the third case study, I advance in time to the Caroline period to consider performances at the Cockpit playhouse. Starting with Fletcher's *Wit Without Money*, performed by several companies in the 1630s, I propose that the development of an indoor-playhouse repertory in the later Jacobean and early Caroline period led to a reconsideration of light as a theatrical eventuality. Light, I argue, becomes a way of setting the scene both physically and symbolically.

In Fletcher's comedy, for instance, light creates a visual juxtaposition between two sides of the stage—with one half in light and the other in darkness—that serves to symbolise the comparative discernment of the characters that occupy either side of the stage. The characters in the light are in the know, while the characters in the darkness lack valuable pieces of information. I follow this analysis with an in-depth study of particular scenes from two plays by John Ford: *Love's Sacrifice* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. In a scene from the former, I consider how light serves to isolate a part of the stage, and in the process, creates two distinct perceptual environments—the characters in the light cannot hear the characters in the dark, and vice versa. While light serves to continually shape and re-shape the visual fields of audiences in these playhouses, it could also form the acoustic and other perceptual fields of characters in fictional space. To finish, I examine the preparatory role of light for the murder of Bergetto (3.7) in Ford's most famous tragedy, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. I also consider both the symbolic and actual significance of the “dark lantern” used by Grimaldi. I suggest that unlike Marston in 1600, Ford builds upon lighting conventions that had become a generalised practice at the indoor playhouses by the Caroline period.

## **Part 2: Being-in-Light at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse**

The second half of the thesis draws on my experiences from a seven-month residency at Shakespeare's Globe (July 2014–January 2015), focusing primarily on the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (SWP). I briefly introduce the story behind the construction of the SWP and outline the key features of the theatrical space. I also survey the different lighting utensils used in the playhouse, and consider the historical evidence behind these instruments. I then discuss how the use of these utensils in SWP productions engages with the historical evidence for their use. I move on to look at the role of the window shutters in the playhouse, which control the amount of electric light that enters the playing space from the interior corridor. Finally, I consider the impact of future plans to put window glass—modeled on early modern examples—into these windows.

Chapter 4 follows this introduction by looking at general lighting practices in the SWP. Using examples from technical rehearsals, workshops, and productions, I examine both the general and idiosyncratic uses of light in the playhouse. I analyse the impact certain lighting practices have on audience reception in the playhouse. Starting with the opening of shows, I examine how the lighting environment of the SWP as the audience first enters determines the effect of subsequent lighting changes. If the playhouse opens with optimum lighting, the first lighting change will always have a darkening effect, whereas if a production opens in relative darkness, the first lighting change will most likely have a brightening effect. I also suggest that the opening lighting environment sets the tone for the subsequent production. Following this analysis, I look at the practice of raising and lowering the chandeliers, arguing that although the practice aims to achieve either a darkening or brightening effect, this effect very much depends on where one is situated in the SWP.

Extinguishing the chandeliers altogether is another common practice in the SWP. Unlike the raising of the chandeliers, the experience of complete darkness is similar across all areas of the playhouse. I focus, therefore, not on the experience of the practice, but on the logistics behind it. In order to create darkness, the chandeliers have to be extinguished by hand. Moreover, if the practice occurs in the middle of a production, then the chandeliers also have to be relit. I compare how different productions performed this practice, with some using the interval to either extinguish or relight the candles, and some incorporating the practice into the action of the play. I conclude by examining the relationship between the signification and functionality of light in the playhouse. For example, I explore how productions circumvent the lack of footlights by placing handheld lights at the front of the stage. I argue that the appropriation of these instruments by modern directors and actors leads to the emergence of a new set of lighting practices informed by historical evidence, but applied by modern theatre practitioners.

Chapter 5 completes the second part of the thesis by comparing the experiences of

playgoing at the SWP with those attending a play at the Globe theatre, situated on the same site. I focus on the “Globe Outside In’ experiments from the 2014 season, in which the Globe productions of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony & Cleopatra* were performed in the SWP for one and two nights, respectively. I describe the parameters of the experiment, comparing the vastly different spatial features of the theatres. I then move on to look at pre-show events of the *Julius Caesar* production, where half an hour before the show, the actors commandeered the public spaces at Shakespeare’s Globe, performing various acts, such as music, poetry readings and puppet shows. I consider how these pre-show events transferred into each theatre, and to what extent these transitions differed between two theatres.

The second half of the chapter opens with a discussion of how people inhabit the various public spaces at Shakespeare’s Globe. I consider what it means to make our way somewhere or other, and how the experience of “way-making” affects our initial experiences of arrival places. The manner in which audience members make their way into both the Globe and SWP has significant impact upon their initial experience of any production. In the case of the *Julius Caesar* production, the transfer of the pre-show events into either playhouse had contrasting and somewhat contradictory effects. In order to explain these differing effects, I consider how the interiors of each theatre relate to the immediate exterior environments outside the theatres. I suggest that the Globe relies on the infiltration of exterior environments, with its audience immersed in the mediums of the open world. The SWP, on the other hand, depends on the clear separation of the exterior public space and interior theatrical space, with its audience encased in a rigorously soundproofed building with no exterior windows. Whereas Globe audience members are always in conversation with the exterior environment through which they made their way into the theatre, audiences at the SWP are closed off from the exterior world.

To conclude Chapter 5 I compare how the *Julius Caesar* and *Antony & Cleopatra* productions used light in the SWP. I suggest that the former adapted the production for the playhouse, whereas the latter adapted the playhouse for the production. *Julius Caesar* had several

lighting changes, with actors regularly entering with handheld lights. *Antony & Cleopatra*, however, kept lighting practices relatively consistent, perhaps in an attempt to mirror the lighting conditions at the Globe. I finish with a discussion of what the “Globe Outside In” experiment may tell us, if anything, about the early modern experiences of playing and playgoing, both outdoors and indoors.

\* \* \*

CLOV: [*harshly*] When old Mother Pegg asked you for oil for her lamp and you told her to get out to hell, you knew what was happening then, no?

[*Pause*]

You know what she died of, Mother Pegg? Of darkness.

HAMM: [*feebly*] I hadn’t any.

CLOV: [*as before*] Yes, you had.

(Beckett, *Endgame*)

\* \* \*

The opening stage directions to Samuel Beckett’s *Endgame* read: “*Bare Interior. / Grey Light*” (1). Throughout the play, despite their efforts to insert some light into their immediate environment, the characters inhabit greyness. This grey light shapes their lives, to the extent that the unseen Mother Pegg dies of light deprivation. Neither Hamm nor Clov have any idea what time of day it is, nor does it particularly matter, for there is no escape from the grey light. Even when Hamm asks Clov to take him to the window—“I want to feel light on my face,” he declares—he is met with a world of limitless grey. Clov can see his light “dying” because greyness permeates everything; looking through the telescope, all Clov can see is “GRREY”—everything they see, they see *in* grey. The inability to-be-in-light leads to melancholy, extreme apathy, and ultimately, death. In witnessing the demise of Mother Pegg, it seems Clov knows the fate that awaits both him and Hamm, even if Hamm is in denial. Beckett, therefore, combines the traditional dichotomy of light and dark—life and death—to create greyness, a kind of living death.

Beckett leaves us in no doubt that when we inhabit light, it also inhabits us; it gets inside and shakes us up. When we come to understand the lives of early modern people, particularly when they inhabited the environments of the early modern playhouses, we can learn from the plights of Hamm and Clov, for light got inside and shook early modern people up too. William Herbert noted, for instance, that “the night is more quiet, then the day: and yet we feare in it what we doe not regard by day. A mouse running, a Board cracking, a dog howling, an Owle scriching put us often in a cold sweat” (1657, 231). How can we doubt that at night darkness was inside Herbert, shaping everything he saw and thought? Similarly, when we stand in the Globe theatre or sit in the SWP, the light we see in is very much part of us too, fashioning *how* we see and *what* we make of it.

In his study of the history of theatrical lighting, Scott Palmer argues that “[t]he phenomenological impact of light ... needs to be recognized as central to the formation of theatrical meaning and our embodied responses to light acknowledged alongside potential semiotic readings on stage” (2013, 76). In this thesis, I attempt to fill the critical gap that Palmer acknowledges, by placing “the phenomenological impact of light” at the heart of my analysis. I suggest that although the material study of lighting in the early modern period is extremely important for understanding what kind of light was in these playhouses, we can only begin to approach it was like to see-in-this-light with the help of theorists such as Merleau-Ponty and Ingold. As Merleau-Ponty tells us, the objects of vision do not encompass the entirety of a visual field. “[W]e shall never, using the world as our starting-point,” he writes, “understand what a *field of vision* is” (2010, 6; original emphasis). The same is true of light in the early modern theatre: we shall never, using its materiality as our starting point, understand what it was like to see *in* it.



# *Part 1*

## Being-in-Light at the Early Modern Theatres

# 1

## Being-in-Light in Early Modern England

If we are to understand what it was like to see in the light of these playhouses, we must initially explore how people inhabited light in everyday life. These daily experiences of light (and darkness) conditioned all visual experiences for early modern people, in the same way that present-day visual experiences emerge from a world of powerful forms of electric lighting. Where an early modern person—accustomed to having only a handful of candles at home—would find a space illuminated by sixty candles quite bright, the same space for us would presumably be rather dark. We can never overcome this disparity between contemporary and early modern experiences of light, even if we could recreate the exact material conditions of light in the early modern period. In this chapter, I explore the histories of light that people brought with them when they attended the early modern theatres. We will find that being-in-light meant something vastly different to early modern people than it does for us.

### Early Modern Nighttime

Perhaps the greatest difference between early modern and contemporary experiences of light can be seen in the comparative experiences of nighttime in the periods. In the early modern world, nighttime, represented an ethical inversion where immorality potentially took the reins from its enlightened counterpart; it was a time when thieves, reprobates, and evil spirits ran free under the opaque blanket of darkness. In this context, light aroused feelings of comfort and security; it signified an escape from the acute anxiety of night, a relief from the indefinable noises and menacing spirits of darkness, and an illuminative reminder of the sanctuary of heaven. Most importantly, light restored the attributes of vision. Daytime was very much considered directly

opposite to nighttime. “[W]e prize day by th’ ugliness of night,” reads a line in the dedication at the start of John Ford’s *The Queen* (1653, A4r). In John Marston’s play *What You Will* (1607), one character says:

Yon gleame is day, darknes, sleepe and feare,  
 Dreames, and the vgly visions of the night  
 Are beate to hell by the bright palme of light,  
 Now romes the swaine and whissells vp the morne:  
 Deepe Silence breakes: all things start vp with light (A4r).

In his work *Toxophilus* (1545), Roger Ascham defends the pastime of archery because it takes place during the day, unlike dicing or gaming:

Shooting hath two tutors to look upon it, out of whose company shooting never stirreth, the one called Daylight, the other Open Place, which two keep shooting from evil company [...] Likewise, dicing and carding have two tutors, the one named solitariousness, which lurketh in holes and corners; the other called night, an ungracious cover of naughtiness, which two things be very inn-keepers and receivers of all naughtiness and naughty things, and thereto they be in a manner ordained by nature. For, on the night time and in corners, spirits and thieves, rats and mice, roads and owls, night-crows and pole-cats, foxes and fowmards [...] with all other vermin and noise beasts, use most stirring; when in the daylight and open places, which ordained of God for honest things, they dare not once come. (1545, C2r)

Most people worked, socialised, and did their business during the day. More importantly, people were expected to do their business during the day. Daytime was perceived to be the place where honest citizens lived their lives. Given this context, the descent of darkness brought with it the fear of a world that was socially and morally antithetical to daytime.

In order to protect themselves against shady nocturnal characters, people retreated into their homes. In his historiography of nighttime, A. Roger Ekirch observes that “shutting in” at night was a common idiom as people sought to defend themselves against the advancing darkness (2005, 90–92). Sir Edward Coke wrote in the period that “the house of everyman is to him as his Castle, and Fortresse, as well as his defence against injuries and violence, as for his repose” (1651, 221). Scholarship on the domestic sphere in the early modern world has evolved incrementally in the last fifty years. From Marc Girouard’s *Life in the English Country House* (1978) through to Catherine Richardson’s *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England* (2006)

and Geraldo U. de Sousa's *At Home in Shakespeare's Tragedies* (2010), we have come to better understand materiality of the early modern domestic space and its portrayal on stage. "The early modern house," de Sousa argues, "embodies both the death of the medieval castle and the birth of the modern home" (2010, 29). At night, homes were safe havens, where families often came together to confront darkness as a group.

City authorities also took steps to protect their inhabitants against outside threats: gates were locked at sunset, masks and visors were illegal, and individuals were often prohibited from moving around in groups after dark. In urban areas, nighttime was usually introduced with the resounding noises of bells, drums, or horns (Ekirch 2005, 61). Ekirch notes that "townspeople hurried home before massive wooden gates, reinforced by heavy beams, shut for the evening and guards hoisted drawbridges wherever moats and trenches formed natural perimeters" (2005, 61).

In 1620, Jacobean pamphleteer Samuel Rowlands described a daily nocturnal scene:

There's not a night I fly throughout the yeare,  
Be it obscurely darke, or Moone light cleere,  
But I behold abuses things vnmeet,  
By such as doe vntimely haunt the street.  
I heare a knocking at your City gates,  
By your good-fellowes, with their drunken pates. (1620, 1–6)

Seemingly, at night, cities took steps to protect themselves from exterior threats. With suspicion rife, anything alien to local knowledge only heightened fear and vulnerability. When a character is asked why he did not pursue an assailant in *Captain Thomas Stukeley*, a play published in 1605, he responds: "Ye see 'tis night, and time we should retire / To guard the town" (2.15–16). Ekirch and Craig Koslofsky both note that citizens were ordered by city councils to carry a light when outside at night. "The main design was not to avert accidents," Ekirch suggests, "the purpose of these regulations, widespread throughout Europe, was, instead, to allow authorities to monitor citizens when the need for oversight was greatest" (2005, 67). Similarly, Koslofsky argues that "failure to illuminate oneself was considered evidence of shadowy intentions" (2011, 133).

Artificial lights were not only a security measure, but they were also representative of a person's

character. Thus, to inhabit nighttime without light was to risk being labeled as a thief or vagabond.

In the late seventeenth century, city authorities took measures to illuminate outdoor spaces at nighttime. Koslofsky provides an in-depth analysis of the lighting procedures of most urban areas across early modern Europe. He suggests that early modern authorities “saw urban illumination as holding back dangers ready to spring forth the moment lighting failed” (2011, 173). He also points out that an improvement in street lighting was not simply desired in order to maintain law and order, but it was actively driven by “a willingness to use the night and to reorder daily time by relaxing curfews” (2011, 133). Although there were improvements to street lighting by the late seventeenth century, it was at best sporadic in Elizabethan and Jacobean London. In his *Survey of London* (1598), John Stow notes that on the “midsummer eve watch of Saints Peter and Pauls [...] every mans doore [...] has also Lamps of glasse, with Oyle burning in them all night” (H6v). In a series of jests published in 1607, Dekker alludes to lanterns hanging outside taverns at night:

A Company of merry Gallants, comming in a winter night late from a Tauerne, to increase that mirth in the streetes (as they went along) which the wine had begotten in them before, fell to taking downe of Lanthornes that their hung out. And one of them being nibling to vntie the cord at which a Sconce hung: a seruant of the house by chance suddenly opened the doore, and tooke him at his worke, roughly asking him what he meant to doe there, nothing Sir, saies the other, but to snuff your candle. (6)

City authorities would have maintained some cursory street lighting in this period, but it was by no means univerrally applied or rigorously enforced. Taverns most likely had lights hanging outside as they were one of the only social spaces dependent on custom at nighttime. Ekirch argues that “only towards the end of the eighteenth century did cities and towns take half-steps to render public spaces accessible at night” (2005, xxvi). In general, city streets were very dark and in order to navigate one’s way through the environment, one had to carry some form of light.

The dark hours brought with them regular disturbances: drunken street quarrels,

burglaries and violent crimes. In his work on “nocturnal disturbances” in early modern Germany (2002), Norbert Schindler notes that, in the main, noises heard at night were made by “unmarried male youths” who were unable to attend taverns because they were too expensive and were socially controlled by adult figureheads (202). Similarly, in her book, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England*, Amanda Flather notes that “there is plenty of evidence to show that young men rampaged in large numbers through the streets of many provincial towns after dark in this period, making contested claims to these spaces that women did not” (2007, 131). Schindler suggests that this behaviour led to a divide between youth and adult culture, where male youths were permitted to settle disagreements between themselves, which normally resulted in violence (208–10). In the anonymous play, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (1598), we see an example of the kind of disagreements Schindler discusses, when the mayor informs the King about the nocturnal activities of his son:

Then if it please your Maiestie, this night betwixt two and three of the clocke in the morning, my Lord the yong Prince with a very disordred companie, came to the old Tauerne in Eastcheape, and whether it was that their Musicke liked them not, or whether they were ouercome with wine, I know not, but they drew their swords. (B1v)

Nighttime enabled young males not only to drink and socialise, but also to settle debates in a way that would not have been tolerated during the daylight hours; that is, with violence.

Koslofsky recognises that youth culture played a major role in any “colonisation” of night, particularly in rural areas, and concludes that authorities often clamped down on the social aspects of youthful disorder by imposing restrictions on all nocturnal adventures:

[T]he authorities focused directly on the night rather than on excesses of nocturnal sociability in their attempts to contain their young servants: even if nothing improper was done and all returned home by a reasonable hour, nocturnal gatherings would still be an offence. (2011, 222)

The difficulty for authorities was that the inability to see at night made it almost impossible to enforce ubiquitous law and order. Ekirch notes that “most nocturnal crime was relatively minor, consisting of non-violent thefts” (2005, 33). Although most crimes may have been relatively minor, it was the fear of being attacked or burgled that carried the greatest threat. The

vulnerability of being-in-darkness heightened the sense that a thief or burglar could suddenly impose upon one's world without warning.

Throughout the early modern period, nighttime was regularly the scene for intense expressions of fear and insecurity. “[S]ome of the most intense, transcendent, and threatening expressions of the diabolical and the Divine were understood *in* and *through* the night in this turbulent age,” Koslofsky notes (2011, 19; original emphasis). Similarly, Ekirch suggests that “it would be difficult to exaggerate the suspicion and insecurity bred by darkness” (8). These suspicions and insecurities were reinforced throughout early modern literature. In Marston’s *Antonio’s Revenge*, for example, Camillo warns the other characters, “You must watch i’t’h nights, / Then’s the most danger” (2.1.359–60). This was certainly an axiom that most early modern people followed. In another play—Thomas Middleton’s *The Revenger’s Tragedy*—Vindice tells Lussurioso:

Well—if anything be damned  
It will be twelve o’clock at night: that twelve  
Will never ‘scape;  
It is the Judas of the hours, wherein  
Honest salvation is betrayed to sin. (1.3.69–73)

Later in the play, Vindice also tells Hippolito, “Night, thou that look’st like funeral herald’s fees / Torn down betimes i’ the morning, thou hang’st fitly / To grace those sins that have no grace at all” (2.2.132–34). He continues, “If every trick were told that’s dealt by night / There are few here that would not blush outright” (147–48). Similarly, in *The Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare wrote that “Light and lust are deadly enemies. / Shame folded up in blind concealing night, / When most unseen, then most doth tyrannise” (675–77). In his treatise, Nashe observed that “there is no theefe that is halfe so hardie in the day as in the night” (B2r). Likewise, in Thomas Dekker’s pamphlet, *Lanthorne and Candlelight* (1609a), which described the criminal activities of London at night, he listed some of the individuals who may have been present in the dark hours, including “Rancke-riders” who “seldome goe vnder sixe or seuen in a company, and these Careeres they fetch” and “Moone men” who were “beggerly in apparell, barbarous in condition, beastly in

behavior” (G3r; H2r). Across all forms of early modern literature, nighttime was regularly depicted as an environment befitting only the marginal and immoral figures of society.

In the darkness of nighttime, rational thought often transformed into irrationality and wild imaginings. Nashe noted that “[i]n the daye time wee torment our thoughts and imaginations with sundry cares and deuices; all the night time they quake and tremble after the terror of their late suffering, and still continue thinking of perplexities they haue endured” (1594, C4r). In the security of daylight, people were able to fix thoughts in the objects of vision. At night, however, thoughts roamed free amongst the darkness, attaching to imagined objects. Nashe documented this experience throughout his pamphlet:

[A]s an arrow which is shot out of a bow is sent forth manie times with such force that it flyeth farre beyond the marke whereat it was aymed, so our thoughts intentiuely fixt all the day time vpon a marke wee are to hit, are now and then ouer-drawne with such force that they flye beyonde the marke of the day into the confines of the night. (C3v–r)

Perhaps the irrationality bred by darkness was most neatly summed up by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when Theseus states that “in the night, imagining some fear / How easy is a bush supposed a bear” (5.1.21–2). Without the ability to see, people filled the darkness with the worst imaginings of their minds.

Light was also a strong symbol of divinity and the Devil represented its antithesis, darkness. In 1616, Thomas Granger preached that “[l]ight signifieth the glory of Heauen [...] darknesse signifieth Hell [...] sinne and wickednesse” (1616, 6–7). The Devil took dominion in darkness because “night alone magnified his powers and emboldened his spirit” (Ekirch 2005, 16). Nashe wrote that “as God is intitled the Father of Light, so is the Deuill surnamed the Prince of darknesse, which is the night” (1594, B2r). Koslofsky argues that “on stage, in learned demonology, and in countless confessions of witchcraft, the night became the time when women and men made themselves culpable and became the Devil’s own” (2011, 43). Throughout the period, therefore, darkness was strongly associated with the devil.



Religion was often represented as the antidote to the darkness of nighttime. Herbert argued, for example that scripture proposed that the relationship between Satan and darkness was more conceptual than actual:

Doe we feare more by night, then by day, because Satan is call'd the Ruler of darknes?  
Then we mistake St Pauls meaning: for he beleev'd not, that Satan had power to rule over  
outward darknes, by bringing or removing light: but he calls him Ruler of the darknes of  
this world, to shew his pow'r over worldlings, whose understanding being darkened, they  
are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance and blindness of their hearts.  
Against such children of darknes Satan beares a great sway both night and day. (1657, 232)

Although scriptural exegesis was presented as a way of combating the relationship between the devil and nighttime, Schindler suggests that fears around nighttime were actually sharpened and depersonalised by theology. “[P]opular fears,” he argues, “became more focused and abstract within confessionalised religiosity, and [...] the churches’ campaigns against ‘superstition’ robbed popular culture of numerous independent means of protection against the forces of evil” (2002, 221). Schindler implies that the logic of Herbert, and other writers who proposed that religion was a means to counteract darkness, actually stopped people from directly challenging the irrational thoughts one would have in darkness.

Nighttime was also portrayed as an environment for self-reflection and prayer. Koslofsky writes extensively on the sanctuary that nighttime provided for persecuted religions, especially in the wake of the reformation. He notes that “turbulent dynastic politics hurled kingdoms from one confession to another, and Christians of all confessions found themselves estranged from the established church of their ruler.” He continues, “Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and Reformed Christians all worshipped secretly at night at some point in the century after the Reformation” (2011, 48). In this sense, nighttime could also be a great liberating force, giving people the autonomy to pursue personal beliefs and pastimes that were either prohibited or chastised in early modern society.

## Nocturnal Liberation

Perhaps we could juxtapose the binary between day and night in the early modern period as a simple antithesis between good and evil, Heaven and Hell, or security and insecurity. To do so, however, would be to over-simplify the complex dynamics of daily experience for early modern individuals. Ekirch notes:

[T]he darkness of night loosened the tethers of the visible world. Despite night's dangers, no other realm of preindustrial existence promised so much autonomy to so many people. Light was not an unalloyed blessing, nor darkness inevitably a source of misery. (2005, 152)

In a period of strict social oversight and daytime labour hours, nighttime was often a reprieve from the exposing hours of daylight. For many people, the dark hours were a source of hedonistic liberation; for others, they provided an ideal setting for privacy and reflection, or simply offered a respite from daily labour. Herbert noted that “night makes me bold [...] and I dare doe that in the dark and in privat, which in companie I forbear” (1657, 217). Similarly, in Dekker and Middleton’s *The Bloody Banquet*, one character tells the others, “Oh sir the better sports taste best in th’ night, / And what we doe in the darke we hate i’ th’ light” (D3r). Although nighttime placed fundamental restrictions on an early modern person’s ability to see and travel, it also offered a sense of autonomy that daytime did not.

Privacy was a luxury in early modern communities. Ekirch writes that neighbourhoods exerted great social control as they “upheld common standards of public and private behaviour” (2005, 149). On this matter, Richardson suggests that “privacy here [in early modern England] is a matter of moving away from the prying eyes of neighbours” (2006, 50). The social oversight of the community meant that neighbourhood opinion often dictated an individual’s social standing. With this in mind, nighttime offered freedom from prying eyes, which occasionally led to behaviour that tested the boundaries of civility and social order.

While privacy in contemporary society is strongly associated with the domestic and interior space, the outdoors was often a private space for early modern people, as Mary Thomas

Crane cogently argues (2009). “[R]eal privacy,” she suggests, “especially for illicit activities, was, until well into the seventeenth century, most often represented as readily attainable only outdoors” (5). At home, the wealthy often had servants sharing bedrooms with family members, and the poor had large families sharing singular domestic space, which meant that privacy was not readily available in the household (Crane, 4–6). According to Flather, many servants “experienced their own domestic spaces as arenas of direct power” and “their movements were carefully monitored” (2007, 48–49). As a result, nighttime liberated these people from the restrictive power of their masters. Part of the reason people viewed privacy as an outdoor phenomenon, Crane argues, was the unfavourable conditions of the early modern household. “[E]arly modern houses,” she writes, “were colder, darker, smokier, and smellier than ours, so that outdoor space would often be more comfortable and appealing than indoors” (2009, 6). Architecturally, houses did not engender privacy. Curtains, for example, were a rare furnishing in the period and even the sight of them aroused suspicion of nocturnal licentiousness (Ekirch 2005, 150).

With the extension of privacy into the open world in the early modern period, Crane argues that “this knowledge provides a warning that we should be careful not to impose our own notions of domestic privacy, reliance on private indoor spaces, and concepts of interiority as an inescapable teleology for the seventeenth century” (2009, 17). Similarly, Lena Orlin notes that “the material history of privacy is not, after all, a settled one” (2007, 111). What we imagine as a private space may be very different to the imaginings of an early modern person. Subjective interiority, for early modern people, did not necessarily mean spatial interiority. Richardson acknowledges that in the early modern period “domestic space meant very different things—different both diachronically in its meanings for us, and synchronically for early modern individuals of diverse gender and status groups” (2006, 4). The evolution of social lighting and domestic architecture has forced privacy away from the natural landscape and into interior spaces. For us in the modern world, privacy is very much encased within walls and roofs. We

could even view modern households as physical expressions of privacy, where private feelings and beliefs are kept within the structure. In a sense, we possess the same desire for autonomy as the early modern subject did, but instead of looking outwardly into the natural environment, as they often did, we now retreat inwardly into our artificial spaces.

A deep historical connection also ran between sexual activity and the outdoors in the early modern period. Crane points to “a long literary pastoral tradition that included outdoor sexual activity as a convention” (2009, 10). Despite the privacy of gardens and other outdoor spaces in the period, however, nighttime was the most apposite setting for sexual privacy, both indoors and outdoors. In John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*, for instance, Antonio and the Duchess conduct their relationship at night, ensuring secrecy from many of the other characters. At one point, Antonio comes to the Duchess’ chamber as she prepares for bed:

ANTONIO: I must lie here  
 DUCHESS: Must? You are a Lord of Misrule.  
 ANTONIO: Indeed my rule is only in the night.  
 DUCHESS: To what use will you put me?  
 ANTONIO: We’ll sleep together  
 DUCHESS: Alas, what pleasure can two lovers find in sleep? (3.2.7–10)

Antonio’s “rule is only in the night” because this is the only time he and the Duchess can obtain some privacy. The same would have been true for many relationships in the period, particularly for premarital and extramarital affairs.

Koslofsky draws attention to the association of sexual activities with the “spinning bees”—places where clothes were made during the day, and young men and women met for nocturnal courtship (2011, 220–21). In a similar vein, Ekirch proposes that sexual encounters happened at alehouses where “within these cramped, ill-lit environs, men and women drank, flirted, and fondled” (2005, 190). Sexual activities amongst adolescents were a common concern for state authorities. “No age was thought more susceptible to sensual passions,” Ekirch suggests (2005, 194). In this respect, unmarried men and women were often castigated as dishonest and

immoral. In response to Joseph Swetnam's depiction of young females in his pamphlet, *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Forward, and Unconstant Women* (1615), Ester Sowernam wrote:

Amongst diuers causes which proceede from nature and custome, why men are so earnest Sutors to women, I haue obserued one, which by practise is daily confessed. *Plato* sayth, that Honestie is of that worthinesse, that men are greatly enflamed with the loue of it; and as they doe admire it, so they studie how to obtaine it: it is apparant, yong men which are vnmarried, and called batchelers, they may haue a disposition, or may serue an apprenticeship to honesty, but they are neuer free-men, nor euer called honest men, till they be married: for that is the portion which they get by their wiues. When they are once married, they are forthwith placed in the ranke of honest men. (1617, 23)

Yet despite the best efforts of religious and state authorities, it seems young men and women often inhabited nighttime in the hope of courtship, with one commentator, for example, referring to men “walking in the blacke and darke night after the strange Woman” (Bolton 1626, 40; original emphasis). Spinning bees and informal dances offered young people the chance to socialise at night without the scrutiny of religious and state authorities. As a result, as Koslofsky suggests, “[t]he sexuality of young adults was at the center of attempts to discipline the rural night” (2011, 220–21).

Not only did darkness offer privacy for sexual activity, but it also gave people who spent most of their days indoors an opportunity to socialise. Ekirch suggests that women, particularly wives, often ventured into the night as they had been consigned to domestic duties throughout the day. He also proposes that “victims of disease, lepers and other sufferers whose physical disfigurements exposed them to daily scorn” often took refuge in the night (2005, 220; 229). Servants also looked forward to the dark hours, as Flather notes that “nighttime, in particular allowed servants more freedom. They sometimes admitted friends into the house without permission, or conducted sexual liaisons with their lovers, after their employers had gone to bed” (2007, 51). Nighttime was, in a sense, a social leveller for servants and attendants, where the power their masters wielded over them during the day evaporated in darkness.

Reading by candlelight was a common practice in wealthy households, where access to candles was readily available. During her childhood, for example, Elizabeth Cary used to bribe

servants to provide her with candles to read at night (Demers 2005, 208). Due primarily to illiteracy and lack of consistent light sources, reading at night amongst the poor and rural classes was predominantly a communal experience where people gathered in groups to listen to texts read out loud (Ekirch 2005, 203).

Whether it was for privacy, sex, socialising, or reading, night was certainly not ubiquitously experienced as a negative phenomenon, despite its association with licentiousness, disorder, and crime. For many people, nighttime brought relief from the visual and social exposure of daylight. Seventeenth-century poet William Drummond of Hawthornden, wrote, “I curse the night, yet doth from day me hide” (1968, 1: 46). Many people would have felt the same as he did since various groups of people willingly inhabited nighttime. However, in doing so, they risked becoming known as “night-walkers.”

### **Night-walking: Gathering Knowledge in Darkness**

Walking at night was considered particularly suspicious in the early modern period. The *Oxford English Dictionary* entry for “night-walking” gives us an insight into what the practice entailed in early modern England and accentuates how the term has evolved in proportion with modern lighting technologies. In 1618, Michael Dalton observed that “[s]uch nightwalkings are vnfit for honest men, and more suiting to the theefe” (“night walking, n,” *OED Online*). We see an example of this definition of night-walking in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, when Pistol warns the other characters, “Take heed; have open eye; for thieves do foot by night” (2.1.110). However, tentatively by the nineteenth century and certainly by the twentieth century, “night-walking” generally refers to sleep-walking. The derivation of the term insinuates that suspicions around night have eased with the introduction of street lighting and more practical portable lighting instruments. Moreover, as Flather notes, night-walking was gendered. “An increasingly powerful rhetoric of disorder,” she writes, “that focused on ‘night-walking,’ and which associated women’s

presence on the streets with sexual immorality, meant that the meanings surrounding men and women's use of the street at night could be profoundly different" (130).

Walking had deep religious significance in the early modern period. In several sermons and other religious literature from the period, the term "walking with God" appears regularly. One author argues, for example that "walking with God, is the Crowne of the Christians character." He continues to explain exactly what the term means:

By walking with God, I meane, a sincere endeauour, punctually and percisely to manage, conduct, and dispose all our affaires, thoughts, words and deeds; all our behaiours, courses, carriage, and whole conuersation, in reuerence and feare, with humilitie and singlenesse of heart, as in the sight of an inuisible God, vnder the perpetuall presence of his All-seeing, glorious, pure eye. (Bolton 1626, 29)

Similarly, in a sermon published in the 1630s, Henry Scudder said:

The morall actions of mans life are aptly resembled by the Metaphor of Walking, which is a moving from one place to another. No man while [h]e liveth here, is at *home* in the [p]lace where he shall be. There [a]re two contrary *homes* to which [e]very man is alwaies going, ei[t]her to *Heaven* or to *Hell*. Every [a]ction of man is one pace or step whereby he goeth to the one place or the other. (1631, 4; original emphasis)

Walking in early modern England was not simply a means of travel, but a way of devoting oneself to a pious life. The importance attached to walking was embodied in the status of the gait in early modern society. How someone walked was a crucial identifier, often denoting social rank. At night, in particular, it would have been easier to recognise someone by their walking style rather than any distinct facial features. In *Othello* (5.1), for example, when Cassio enters into a night scene, Roderigo exclaims, "I know his gait, 'tis he" (23).

As a basic form of travel, walking may seem like a human action that transcends the divide between then and now. Yet for early modern people, travel was primarily by foot. Tim Ingold notes:

[I]n Britain and Europe from around the eighteenth century onwards, the business of travel came to be distinguished from the activity of walking. For most people in the British Isles, before the days of paved roads and public transport, the only way to get about was on foot. (2011, 37)

People also travelled by horse and cart in early modern England, including travelling playing companies, but for most city-dwellers, to travel was to walk. In the introduction to his historiography of walking, Joseph Amato observes:

In the last hundred years, walking ... has become increasingly segmented, circumscribed, and limited. At the same time, it has become a matter of choice, involving questions of health and recreation, as well as an assertion of individual lifestyle and social philosophy. (2004, 2)

In contemporary society, walking is often tied up in ecological discourses, where the physical act represents dissatisfaction with and protest against damaging forms of motorised transport. Moreover, in major cities, people often walk in order to catch motorised transport. When we come to think of the physical act of “night-walking,” we find that not only was nighttime a completely different phenomenon for early modern people, but so too was walking.

In her book on the relationship between walking and English literary culture in the nineteenth century, Anne Wallace suggests that people did not pay much attention to the actual physical act of walking and were more concerned about the places they walked to and from. For instance, she notes that travel writing in the period “ideally excludes the process of travel, the travail of moving from place to place, and its advocates and practitioners seek to make that process as nearly transparent and unnoticeable as possible” (1993, 40). Part of the reason for this exclusion, Wallace argues, was the association of walking with the poor and lower class. Yet in the early seventeenth century, walking transcended social divisions. Karen Newman argues that “[t]ravelling urban space ... was perhaps the chief pastime of the early modern city dweller regardless of social rank.” She continues:

Walking the city was undertaken for myriad purposes—to carry on business, to shop and consume, to encounter those whom one could not hope or expect to encounter elsewhere in more exclusive interior spaces, to see and be seen—in short, to absorb social knowledge offered by streets, shops, cries and street sellers, outdoor theatres, passersby (2014, 206)

In Dekker’s jests, we catch a glimpse of exactly the kind social encounters that Newman refers to here. In one, a citizen meets a kinsman “about the Strand.” In another, a couple of merchants are



“walking on the Change” (1607, 2). For early modern people, life often took place in the act of transportation: getting from one place to another was part of the fun. Having lived in present-day London for a period of time, I can certainly say that much of that fun has been lost.

The physical act of walking from one place to another—with an intended destination in mind or not—is not simply a means to an end, but is, in fact, a complex form of knowledge-gathering, as Ingold proposes:

By *becoming knowledgeable* I mean that knowledge is grown along the myriad paths we take as we make our ways through the world in the course of everyday activities, rather than assembled from information obtained from numerous fixed locations. Thus, it is by *walking along* from place to place, and not by building up from local particulars, that we come to know what we do. (2010, 121–22; original emphasis)

When early modern inhabitants walked through London they were gathering a form of kinaesthetic knowledge about the city that they inhabited. They implicitly knew how to navigate a cobbled street or a muddy lane because they thought not *on* their feet but *with* their feet, as they tapped into an embodied history of walking through particular environments. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), Michel de Certeau calls walkers the “ordinary practitioners” of the city “whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban ‘text’ they write without being able to read it” (93). Walking is thus a story written by the feet, a narrative that forges ahead, while at the same time builds on what has been written before. For Ingold, walking is “[r]hythmic not metronomic,” it is “a pattern of lived time and space” (2011, 46). In short, walking is habitation in locomotion. “Through walking,” argues Ingold, “landscapes are woven into life, and lives are woven into the landscape, in a process that is continuous and never-ending” (2011, 47). When early modern Londoners walked around their city, the city became woven into their movements in a continual and evolving symbiosis.

Of course the “ordinary practitioners” of early modern London did their walking during the day and in doing so, they gathered knowledge amidst daylight. But what about people who walked at night? What kind of kinaesthetic knowledge did they gather? In a fascinating discussion on going for a walk with an eighty-three year old man, Griet Scheldeman suggests that in order to

truly understand how others walk, we must walk with them rather than listen to or read about their experiences (2011). Her elderly walking partner (“William”) had warned her in advance that he walked slowly, but she did not truly understand the meaning of this phrase until she walked *with* him:

Beyond merely talking or thinking with William, I needed to move with him if I was to get even the sliver of an understanding of what it means to him to walk slowly. In the process I also became aware of my own movement, by recognising how it differs to his. (140)

Perhaps then if we are to truly understand what it meant to walk at night for the early modern person, we should try and walk *with* them. I shall imagine, therefore, walking with a companion through early modern London at nighttime, drawing on the nocturnal environments discussed previously in this chapter. Given the fact that men predominantly inhabited nighttime in the period, as Flather points out, I presume that my companion is male (2007, 131). I also presuppose that my companion regularly walks at nighttime, perhaps as a night-watchman.

We set off. Street lighting is sporadic at best—occasionally lanterns hang outside taverns—and in general it is very dark, certainly in comparison to a street at night in present-day London. My companion carries a lantern (I let him carry it because I presume he knows best how to use it), which enables me to see my very immediate surroundings. I spend most of my time looking at the ground, scared that I might roll my ankle on the cobbled streets. Certainly, I am not wearing appropriate footwear. My boot-clad companion, however, looks straight ahead and moves more quickly than me—he is not afraid that he might trip. It is also very quiet. I am startled by any noise that breaks this silence, whereas my companion carries on walking; I can only assume he knows what to listen for. Occasionally we see lights in the distance, veering off to the right or left into another street. My companion seems to know where he is going, while I have no clue where the street ends or where our next turn may be. I am in a permanent state of anxiety, not only afraid of the darkness and silence, but also of injuring myself. I struggle to understand how my companion can remain so composed amidst this environment. He seems at

one with the street and the darkness, in a kind of rhythmic synthesis with the stone on the ground, the damp in the air, and the darkness in the sky. Whereas I watch my step, consciously mapping my feet onto the pavement in front of me, his footwork is effortless. By contrast, I am extremely unskilled in this environment.

Unlike Scheldeman's walking partner, my companion is imaginary, and how he walks at nighttime is an estimate from what I know about early modern nighttime. By walking with my early modern companion, albeit imaginatively, I can start to understand tentatively what it meant to be a night-walker in the period. Like Scheldeman and her elderly walking partner, I understand how my companion walks by comparing it to how I walk with him. My movements are different to his: my head is facing down, my footsteps slow and deliberate, and my muscles tense. He, on the other hand, faces forwards, his footsteps flow, and he seems considerably less rigid. Thus, to say that early modern people walked at night is one thing. But to understand what this meant to them is another: because in walking, their lives entangled with the environment and they continued to write a story with their feet.

Night-walkers were extremely common on the early modern stage. In Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, for example, the villainous Barabas inhabits most of the night scenes in the play. Under the cover of darkness, he convinces Abigail to feign repentance in order to go into the nunnery to collect the money and jewels he has hidden there (1.2.280–365). He enters in Act two, scene one, with a light in hand and contemplates two options: either Abigail retrieves the money “or let the day / Turn to eternal darkness after this” (2.1. 15–16). When Barabas first meets Ithamore he says, “I walk abroad o’ nights, / And kill sick people groaning under walls: / Sometimes I go about and poison wells” (2.3.179–81). In response, Ithamore tells Barabas of his nocturnal escapades, “And in the night-time secretly would I steal / To travellers’ chambers, and there cut their throats” (211–12). Barabas responds, “Why, this is something. Make account of me / As of thy fellow; we are villains both” (2.3.218–19). At night, Barabas and Ithamore write a similar story with their feet and consequently, they find themselves with a lot in common.

People who night-walked not only risked moral corruption, but they also jeopardised their health. Ekirch notes how the dew instigated by the night air was considered “a menace to health” by initiating fever and colds, and proliferating contagion (2005, 12). Herbert, for instance, observed that “when night hath drawn her black vaile, and we are about to take rest; then the potion begins to work, and puts us into distemper” (1657, 232). Similarly, in *Julius Caesar*, Portia worries about Brutus’ health as he walks at night:

Is Brutus sick? And is it physical  
To walk unbracèd and suck up the humours  
Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick?  
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed  
To dare the vile contagion of the night  
And tempt the rheumy and unpurgèd air  
To add unto his sickness? (2.1.260–65)

Nighttime, in this example, is active; it does not serve to simply represent illness, but it aids and abets illness by altering the body, both internally and externally.

Fears about the health risks of walking at night tied in with ideas about humoral theory in the early modern period, in which emotional experience (“passions”) was a result of the balance of the four bodily humours: black bile, yellow bile, blood, and phlegm. In *Humoring the Body* (2004), Gail Kern Paster describes this theory of emotions as a form of “psychological materialism,” in which “passions” were very much physical entities that existed in the world (12). She notes that “for the early moderns, knowledge of emotions required knowing not only about the spleen, the gall bladder, and the liver, which produced various emotions, but also what in the natural world their organs and emotions resembled” (27). Thomas Wright’s *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1604) outlined early modern beliefs about humoral theory. “All Physitians,” he wrote, “commonly agree, that among diverse other extrinsecall causes of diseases, one, and nor the least, is, the excesse of some inordinate Passion” (4). An excess of black bile, for example, caused melancholia. Inhabiting nighttime, therefore, increased the chances of melancholia as the darkness of the night was strongly associated with black bile. Nashe, for instance, referred to his “foggie-brained melancholie” at night (1594, C2r). In *Antonio’s Revenge*, the title character says at

one point, “I oped / A large bay window, through which the night / Struck terror into my soul” (1.3.50–2). The darkness of nighttime does not simply evoke “terror” for Antonio, but it actually penetrates the skin and touches the “soul.” Continuing, Antonio discusses the after-effects of this experience:

I pray thee peace. I tell you gentlemen  
The frightful shades of night yet shake my brain;  
My gellied blood’s not thawed; the sulphur damps  
That flow in wingèd lightning ‘bout my couch  
Yet stick within my sense, my soul is great  
In expectations of dire prodigies (1.3.72–7)

For Antonio, the enduring emotional effect of nighttime is a bodily phenomenon: he notes the shaking of his brain, the coolness of his blood, and the “sulphur damps” that surround him and “stick” to his sense of self.

The relationships between body and world in these descriptions of nighttime evoke the imagery of “being honeyed” (Merleau-Ponty 2008, 46–47). We might imagine dipping our hands into a large pot of honey (or any slimy substance): what happens next? Jean-Paul Sartre considers this scenario in *Being and Nothingness* (1992) when he observes that “I open my hands, I want to let go of the slimy, and it sticks to me, it draws me, it sucks me” (776). He continues, “These long, soft strings of substance which fall from me to the slimy body (when, for example, I plunge my hand into it and then pull it out again) symbolize a rolling off of myself in the slime. [...] To touch the slimy is to risk being dissolved in sliminess” (777). Ultimately, he concludes that “[f]rom the moment of its appearance it [slime] transcends all distinctions between psychic and physical, between the brute existent and the meanings of the world; it is a possible meaning of being” (779). Sartre’s description here resembles Paster’s idea of early modern passions as a form of “psychological materialism,” where the distinction between emotions and physical is very much the same as the relationship between a hand and honey. When Brutus walks at night, or when Antonio opens a window to let the night air in, there is a sense that they are being covered in the slimy and sticky substance of nighttime. In doing so, they could not shake this substance

away from their bodies any more than the hand can shake honey away from it. For Merleau-Ponty, the “quality of being honeyed” can be used to “symbolise an entire pattern of human behaviour” (2008, 47). In the early modern world, exterior environments were perceived to be like honey: sticky, slimy, and extremely hard to shake off. To walk at night was to be covered in a kind of dark honey that stuck to the body and continually changed in shape as a person made his or her way through the world. For some, this covering was a blessing. Yet for others, the stickiness was to be avoided as much as possible.

### **Artificial Light**

To combat darkness, early modern people had only a handful of options, with artificial lighting restricted to flame-based technologies. The ability of these artificial lights to illuminate the environment was far inferior to that of natural light. In *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592), Robert Greene observed the illuminative disparity between daylight and candlelight. “Why thou beggars brat descended from the reuersion of base pouertie, is thy insolence so greate to make comparison with me, whose difference is as great as the brightnesse of the sunne and the slender lighte of a candle,” he writes (13). For most people, artificial light was essentially a stopgap, a way of getting through the dark hours until sunrise. However, at churches and court in the period, artificial light was more than a mere necessity, serving to illuminate altars or elaborate entertainments.

Candles were the most ubiquitous lighting utensils in the period. In his rigorous monograph on lighting in the early modern theatre (1999), R. B. Graves suggests that “candles were much as we know them today but more awkward and dangerous to keep burning for any convenient length of time” (14). Tallow (vegetable or animal fat) was the most common form of candle, often made and used at home. Graves notes that “besides producing an obtrusive smell, [tallow] candles smoked profusely” (16). They also required regular maintenance such as “snuffing” in order to stop the candle from “guttering,” which Graves explains as “the

unfortunate result of a wick's falling down into the molten fuel" (1999, 14). During experiments with tallow, William O'Dea observed that "as the candle burned away the position of the source of light altered" (1958, 39). Attending to a tallow candle had several benefits: it regulated the smoke and smell produced, and most importantly, it restored the original brilliance of the flame, as one character alludes to in *Antonio's Revenge*. "Her eyes do shine, for to say sooth, / Like a new-snuffed candle," Balurdo says (3.2.38–39).

The other type of candle used in the period was made from beeswax. In his work on theatre lighting in Europe (1977), Gösta M. Bergman argues that beeswax "yielded the clearest and most constant light" of the two types of candles in the early modern period (1977, 54). Similarly, O'Dea suggests that there were relatively few disadvantages in the well-made beeswax candle" and that they "could be left for hours without any attention at all" (1958, 6). Beeswax was somewhat expensive and often had to be imported from central and southern Europe (Graves 1999, 14). These candles were reserved for upper classes, used primarily at court and in churches (Bergman 1977, 54). Yet Graves argues that the Elizabethan and Jacobean courts "suffered the disagreeable effects of tallow," and that "[o]nly in the reign of Charles I were wax candles widely deployed for the illumination of plays" (1999, 15). Whether it was tallow or beeswax, candles certainly offered the most common respite from the darkness of nighttime in the early modern period.

Other domestic lights included lamps, which were metal cylindrical contraptions. Graves explains how they worked:

The hollow is filled with vegetable or animal oil, and a wick, almost always of vegetable material, is placed into the oil with one end protruding into the air. [...] The principal advantage of lamps is their convenience: only when the fuel is exhausted or the wick totally consumed do they require attention. (1999, 11)

Like beeswax, "fine oil had to be imported and was prohibitively expensive" (Graves 1999, 12). The common domestic lamp smoked profusely and spluttered oil. Graves concludes that "lamps were associated with kitchens and the hearth where spattering grease and smoke was less

troublesome than in other rooms” (1999, 12). Tapers (thin ropes dipped in tallow) were also used indoors, despite the fact that they produced a lot of smoke. Graves notes that tapers had “the advantage of requiring little snuffing” and “they were used as night-lights in bedrooms, where they could burn safely with little attention” (1999, 22). In both *Cymbeline* (2.2.5) and *Julius Caesar* (2.1.35), tapers burn in the chambers of Imogen and Brutus, respectively. Similarly, when she sleep-walks, Lady Macbeth enters with a taper that has presumably been burning in her bedroom through the night (5.1.15.sd).

There were a variety of lighting instruments used outdoors, with torches (hemp rope wrapped around a wooden staff) being the most effective (Graves 1999, 18). Graves notes that “torches were occasionally brought indoors into the great halls of the wealthy, where smoke could rise and sufficient numbers of servants could attend to them” (1999, 20). Lanterns were similar in shape to lamps and “contained a single candle protected by sheets of animal horn, though animal skin, talc (mica), and glass were also employed” (Ekirch 2005, 124). Dark lanterns were essentially the same as normal lanterns, except the flame could be shuttered off. The ability to hide oneself meant that these devices were aligned with sinister motives. In John Fletcher’s play *The Nightwalker*, a dark lantern is associated with the period’s most famous villain, Guy Fawkes:

My Aunt has turn’d me out a doors, she has,  
At this unchristian houre, and I doe walke,  
Me thinkes, like *Guido Faux* with my darke Lanthorne,  
Stealing to set the towne a fire. (3.2.33–6)

Ekirch suggests that possession of a dark lantern in Rome could result in imprisonment (2005, 67). However, it was not only the dark lantern that had representational significance, as there existed a social hierarchy between the other types of artificial lights. In Dekker and Webster’s *Westward Ho!* (1607), for instance, one character tells us that “the Cobler, in the night time walks with his Lanthorne, the Merchant, and the Lawyer with his Link, and the Courtier with his Torch” (1607, D1r). Interestingly, in the social order depicted here, the effectiveness of the



lighting utensil is proportional to the social standing of the person who carries it. The cobbler has the weakest light whereas the courtier has the brightest. Importantly, then, artificial lights were not only categorised on how they functioned, but also on what they said about a person's social status.

### **Entering the Theatre**

Before I come to explore how early modern people inhabited the various early modern theatres, I want to reflect upon the significance of the general lighting environments discussed in this chapter. When we go to the theatre, our visual experiences are built largely on a history of inhabiting electrically-lit spaces, not to mention the conventional practices of modern theatre lighting. Surely then for early modern people, spending roughly half their life in darkness, with only rudimentary artificial lights as a means to combat it, must have in some way affected how they saw in the early modern playhouses. Thus, we must not view the theatrical event as the starting point for acts of perception. Rather, what happened on stage occurred in the midst of lives that had gone on before, were presently going on, and would continue to go on after the event. People's life stories, particularly their history with light, affected any subjective experience they had and any future experiences they may have. Theatrical experience did not happen out of nowhere for early modern people; rather, every act of perception in these playhouses built upon all previous perceptual acts. For as Merleau-Ponty tells us, "each moment of time calls all the others to witness" (2010, 79). Whether it was writing a story with their feet through walking, or adding to the story of vision by opening their eyes, early modern people were perpetually immersed in their environments and as such, their particular stories of perception were continually reinforced by these inhabitations.

We must also consider how people inhabited the lighting environments of these playhouses, at the most basic level. That is, we must ask: what was it like to inhabit the weather of amphitheatres and how did it affect sense perception? How did protection from the weather at

the indoor playhouses impact theatrical experience? How changeable (either naturally or deliberately) were these lighting environments and how did plays engage with the environments in which they took place? How did dramatists and playing companies portray the actual lighting environments of early modern England on these stages? Only by exploring the answers to these questions can we start to understand tentatively the story of perception for people in the various early modern playhouses. In the same way that Scheldeman had to walk with her elderly walking partner in order to understand what “walking slowly” meant to him, if we are to understand what seeing was like for people in the early modern theatres, then we must in some way try to see *with* them.

## 2

### Being-in-Light at the Early Modern Theatres

Theatre requires light—that much is obvious. However, the extent to which theatre incorporates light into its composition and general practices differs vastly between contemporary and early modern theatre. The role of the lighting designer, which rapidly developed during the twentieth century, accentuates the importance of lighting in contemporary theatre practice. Lighting can be used to isolate parts of the stage in order to create emotional effects, to highlight particular actors as well as to create authentic reproductions of nighttime and other environments. Contemporary dramatists write plays armed with the knowledge that they can use light to particular ends. In the early modern theatre, by comparison, light was more functional than artistic. At the outdoor playhouses, daylight enabled early modern audiences to see the action on stage but not much more. However, as Martin White notes, “[a] dramatist writing for an indoor playhouse ... knew he had the facility to adjust the lighting states, if only to a limited degree” (1998, 149). However, we must take care not to assimilate modern theatre’s dependency on light into the concerns of early modern theatre practitioners, as R. B. Graves warns, “[i]nvariably, each age interprets the sparse information about Shakespeare’s stage based in part on its own aesthetics and theater practice” (1999, 65). We must always keep in mind that if playing companies experimented with light at indoor playhouses, as White implies, they did so not because it was expected of them, but because they were exploring alternative ways of producing theatre.

There is no doubt that audiences at the amphitheatres and indoor playhouses inhabited contrasting perceptual environments at the two venues. At the amphitheatres, audiences inhabited the outdoors, and sense perception took place amidst the fluctuations of weather and daylight. At the indoor playhouses, audience were enclosed in a stable perceptual environment,

where the variations of weather had little effect on their capacities to see, hear, and feel. The comparative environments of the outdoor and indoor commercial playhouses in early modern London must surely have affected an audience's experience of the events that occurred on stage. In this chapter I lay out some of the conditions that early modern people inhabited at these playhouses, and explore how these environments may have affected the production of theatre in the period.

### **Amphitheatres**

Performances in early modern London's amphitheatres took place during the afternoon. Daylight, therefore, presents two significant problems to understanding what kind of light people saw in in these theatres. Firstly, weather conditions constantly vary. Secondly, it is difficult to ascertain the exact starting-time of plays in these theatres from the evidence available. Considering the latter problem initially, E.K. Chambers concludes that "before the end of the sixteenth century the time for beginning had been fixed at 2 o'clock" (1923, 2: 543). However, Graves argues that it is impossible to give an exact starting-time for plays in the period. He surmises, from references in plays such as Thomas Goffe's *The Careless Shepherdess* to spectators leaving one theatre for another, that the starting-time was somewhere between 2 and 4 p.m. (1999, 80). If so, some plays would have started in daylight and finished in twilight or darkness, especially during the winter. Recently, Michael J. Hirrel argues that from the mid-1590s, performances started at 2 p.m. and lasted for four hours (2010, 162–63). The plays did not last four hours in-themselves, Hirrel suggests; rather the overall event, including inter-act entertainments, took place within this four-hour period (2010, 169). He warns, however, that "[n]otwithstanding the shortcomings of the evidence, it is possible that some acting companies, especially minor ones, began their performances at times other than 2 p.m. Rigorous consistency is not to be expected in matters Elizabethan" (2010, 164). Thus, it is impossible to ascertain the exact time of performances in early modern London but 2 p.m. seems as legitimate as any

assumption. Whether this starting-time rigorously adhered to, however, we do not know.

In a recent article, Tiffany Stern (2015) shows that measuring time was an imprecise practice in early modern England, particularly when it comes to measuring lengths of theatrical performances. The most common time instruments, she notes, were “sandglasses,” or “hourglasses” in modern parlance, which gave only a rough estimate of an hour—especially if they had been handled during this time—and were rarely in sync across households and indoor spaces (3–9). In public spaces, sundials provided accurate measurements of time, but these were dependent on location and sunlight, which was rarely, if ever, consistent. People could only use sundials in sunny weather and during the hours of daylight (9–11). Stern suggests that various forms of portable sundials may have made their way into the playhouses, but “the building will have rendered them all but useless” (12). Public clocks, attached to churches and the like, would have been the most ubiquitous measurement of time for people living in cities, but as Stern notes, “for all their meticulousness within the hour, they were less accurate than any other kind of time measure” (14). The main reason for their unreliability was that clocks never ran at a consistent pace. “When they had just been wound,” Stern writes, “they would unwind quickly; when they had not been wound for a while, they would unwind slowly: all clocks started too fast and ended too slow” (14). Church bells rang on the hour, but since the clocks all ran at varying speeds depending on the last time they had been wound, “each of London’s clocks ... would strike the hour at a different moment” (18). Yet despite the lack of evidence for exact starting-times and the impreciseness of time measurements, outdoor performances always started in the afternoon, both in winter and summer. The medium of vision in these theatres, therefore, was always natural light.

Artificial lights were used on the outdoor stage, but whether they added significantly to the overall illumination of the playhouse is highly doubtful (Graves 1999, 113–24). Artificial lights were not particularly bright, as I noted in Chapter 1, and would have really have had very little effect unless the natural environment was very dark. “Because early lighting utensils strong

enough to produce readily apparent rises in the level of light were inevitably quite large,” writes Graves, “it follows that spectators would find it difficult not to be blinded by them in overall dim light unless steps were taken to reduce glare” (1999, 118). E. K. Chambers, however, doubted that “in the depth of winter, daylight could have served quite to the end [of a performance].” He speculated that “some primitive illumination, in the form of cressets, or baskets of tarried and flaring rope, was introduced” (1923, 2: 543). Graves counters this argument by suggesting that “[a]n audience watching a play lit by natural light will gradually grow accustomed to the decreasing light and may easily find viewing comfortable well past sunset” (1999, 120). Certainly, early modern people would have been more accustomed than modern audiences to seeing in low-level lighting. Ultimately, Graves concludes:

Considering the size of the area to be lit, the desirability of using as many lights as possible, and the problems English weather might have caused in keeping them lit, I am skeptical that the artificial lights at the actors’ disposal played a major role in the general illumination of the amphitheatres. (1999, 121)

The logistics involved in using sufficient artificial lighting at the amphitheatres would have been extremely arduous for early modern playing companies, especially given that the effect of these lights on the overall lighting environment of the theatre would have been relatively minimal.

The positioning of the stage within the London amphitheatres suggests that stage lighting was not a principal concern for early modern dramatists. Not all amphitheatres placed their stage in the same direction in relation to the sun, which suggests performances were not reliant on daylight reaching the stage (Gurr 2009, 180). However, the most popular stage position was in the southwest of the theatre. The Second Globe, Boar’s Head, and Hope playhouses all have their stages against the southwest wall of their auditoriums. As Graves shows, stages positioned in these areas would have been in the shade throughout performances, regardless of the starting-time (1999, 86–95). The southwest orientation may seem strange to us, Graves posits, but “the lack of perspective scenery meant that the stage could be properly seen from many viewpoints, not just opposite the stage” (1999, 94). In a piece for *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*

(2009), Graves concludes that “the general effect at the amphitheatres is ... a well-shaded stage without strong contrasts of light and dark due to direct sunlight” (532). Although I would refrain from making any universal judgments about the “general effects” of stage positioning in amphitheatres as several of these theatres positioned their stage in other directions, it seems clear that a stage positioned in the south-west of an auditorium would have rarely, if ever, been in sunlight.

Stage covers also helped shade the stages in these amphitheatres, yet their primary role may have been to protect actors—and more importantly, costumes—from rain (Graves 1999, 100). Moreover, the stage covers had strong emblematic qualities, with iconography of the heavens painted on the ceiling. If the stage cover represented the heavens, then the stage traps depicted hell, with the stage itself illustrating earth (Gurr 2009, 223). Yet it would be plausible to conclude that although stage covers may not have used primarily in response to daylight, they still helped protect stages from strong variants in light and shade. The evidence implies, therefore, that a shaded stage was the preferred lighting environment for playing companies at the outdoor playhouses in this period. At the very least, there was no specific lighting preference, and given the unpredictability of weather conditions, it seems likely that playing companies would have taken steps to limit the extent to which light influenced performances.

### **The Early Modern “Weather-world”**

The weather was important in these amphitheatres because not only did it determine the amount of daylight that illuminated the stage and auditorium, but it also affected the bodies of the actors and audience. What people saw, heard, and felt in these playhouses was a result of their immersion in the light, sound, and air of these outdoor spaces. Graves argues that “London is not famous for its sunshine, and what evidence we have indicates that the weather in Shakespeare’s time was rather worse than it is now” (1999, 84). There are several references to the Thames freezing over on a number of occasions during the winter, and even the summer could

be cold and wet (Graves 1999, 84). Thomas Dekker, for instance, in *The Cold Yeare* (1615), recorded the “deepe snow” of 1614 through an imaginary conversation between a London shopkeeper and a “North-Country-man.” The latter tells us that “poore harmelesse Birds could not be suffered in such pittifull cold weather” (C1v). In the same piece, the shopkeeper says, “It’s a signe that Tradesmen and Handy-crafts, haue either little to doe, or else can doe little, by reason of the Weather, when they throw their Tooles, fall & to flinging of Snowbals” (C3r). Also, at the end of *The Ravens Almanacke* (1609c), Dekker wrote:

[T]hus because much fowle weather is to-ward (if any Callender tell no lyes) and that I am loath to haue you stande in a storme, I bid you farewell, dated the 1 Ides of the first month of this first great Platonick and terrible yeare, 1609. (A4r)

He implies here that January regularly had bad weather, which will come as no surprise to present-day Londoners.

The amphitheatres would have suffered the effects of the kind of weather conditions that Dekker discussed. One source from the period observed that “about the houres of foure or fieve, it waxe cloudy, and then rain downrichte, they shall sit dryer in the Galleries, than those who are vnderstanding men in the yard” (Daw 1622, I1v). Graves points out that “ticket receipts in Henslowe’s diary record uninterrupted strings of performances by the company [Lord Admiral’s Men] six days a week over many seasons” (1999, 85). Seemingly, performances at these outdoor venues would have taken place in a variety of different weather conditions, which would have been almost impossible to predict in advance. The varying winds and “fowle weather” that Dekker refers to would have been commonplace in early modern amphitheatres. Presumably a ticket in one of the galleries at the early modern amphitheatres was preferable not simply because it offered a reprieve from the groundlings, but also because the galleries offered some protection from the weather, particularly rain. In *The Guls Horne-Booke* (1609b), Dekker tells the readers what to do if they are either bored or sick of the weather at the amphitheatres:

Mar[r]y if either the company, or indisposition of the weather binde you to sit it out, my counsell is then that you turne plaine Ape, take vp a rush and tickle the earnest eares of your fellow gallants, to make other fooles fall a laughing: mew at passionate speeches,



blare at merrie, finde fault with the musicke, whew at the childrens Action, whistle at the songs. (33)

Here Dekker reports the behaviour of the gallants at the early modern theatres, including the hall playhouses. It is entirely possible that on some occasions when these audience members felt “indisposition of the weather” they behaved in the way Dekker describes.

Thus, when people went to see a play at the early modern amphitheatres, they were not only inhabiting daylight but the weather also. Yet the weather is almost absent from the study of early modern theatre, despite the fact that every performance at the outdoor playhouses took place in the sun, rain, wind, cold, snow, or a mixture of these conditions. In fact, the weather is largely absent from any studies of visual perception outdoors. Tim Ingold notes that “in the scholarly literature on visual perception, scarcely a word is to be found on the question of *how* the weather impacts upon practices of vision” (2005, 98; original emphasis). The weather is fundamental to perception outdoors, Ingold tells us, because it sets the parameters of what we see, hear, and feel:

As an experience of light, sound and feeling that suffuses our awareness, the weather is not so much an *object* of perception as what we perceive *in*, underwriting our very capacities to see, to hear and to touch. As the weather changes, so these capacities vary, leading us not to perceive different things, but to perceive the same things differently. (2011, 130; original emphasis)

Ingold describes this experience as the “weather-world” in which human beings, instead of living a life “on the earth” and “under the sky,” actually live *through* the earth and sky (2011, 115–35; original emphasis). “To feel the air and walk on the ground,” writes Ingold, “is not to make external, tactile contact with our surroundings but to mingle with them” (2011, 115). For example, how could we live at all if we could not inhale and exhale air? (Ingold 2011, 120). By inhabiting the outside world we open ourselves up to the weather and allow it to shape how we see, hear, and feel. Instead of considering the weather as an external condition that changes the shape of the things that we perceive, we might start to think about how the weather determines the way we come to perceive these things in the first place.

There is no doubt that the experience of a play on a sunny day at the early modern amphitheatres would have differed to seeing the same play in rain and wind. Yet, to my knowledge, there is little serious consideration of this fact in studies of early modern theatre. Perhaps the fact that we do most of our thinking and writing about the early modern theatre from indoors, free from the affectivity of the weather-world, has led us to undervalue the role that weather played in sense perception at these amphitheatres (Ingold 2011, 119). If we did our thinking and writing outside, it would be harder to ignore the wind buffeting us, the sunlight beaming down on us, or the rain falling on us. When early modern people went to London's amphitheatres, they could not ignore the weather. Any responses they had to the events on stage were always immanent to their inhabitation of the weather-world.

Let us consider the Johannes de Witt's sketch of the Swan from 1596. The drawing is our only piece of illustrative evidence about the interior of the amphitheatres in the period. Scholars have thus debated various features of the playhouse depicted—the number of doors, the position of the Lord's room, the size of tiring house—as well as the limitations of the drawing as a piece of evidence. These are obviously important debates in themselves, but the most important aspect of the sketch is often taken for granted: *the sky*. When Graves suggests that we share daylight with Shakespeare and his contemporaries (1999, 2–3), he imagines the sky as a ceiling that sits above the earth. The sun is a furnishing, and the position of the other pieces of furniture—mainly clouds—determines the amount of light that reaches the human body and the materials of the playhouses. However, Ingold raises an important question: “is the sky part of the landscape or is it not?” (2011, 127). If perception is about objects and materials, which is to say things that exist *on* the earth, then the sky is surely nothing more than an intangible overhead that illuminates the earth, and the ground a platform for things to sit upon. Life, then, takes place between the earth and sky. Yet if the sky is not part of the landscape, then how do we see anything at all?

In order to answer this question, Ingold turns to landscape painting. He notes that a large portion of these paintings is usually taken up by the sky. “The painter,” he argues, “is depicting a

world of both earth and sky, recognising full well that in the play of colour, light and shade, one could not exist without the other” (2011, 127). As an experiment—albeit an unlikely one—he proposes:

Suppose that we take a masterpiece of landscape art and cut the canvas along the horizon or skyline. Discarding the upper part, we then paste the lower part onto light blue or light grey wallpaper. Would it make any difference? Of course it would. But in all writings on landscape art, I would challenge anyone to find some explanation to what the difference is. (2011, 127)

Perhaps the fact that the Swan drawing exists in black and white has led us to ignore the role of the sky in this sketch. Maybe, like the landscape painters Ingold refers to, de Witt knew that the physical objects of the theatre depicted could not exist without the white open expanse at the top of the drawing. But crucially in the early modern amphitheatres, this expanse was not blank, but rather it was a continually evolving sky that conditioned the weather-world that people inhabited below—the air they felt in, the sound they heard in and most significantly, the light they saw in. Thus, to see outdoors is to be-in-the-sky because, as Ingold points out, “[w]e see in the sky as we see in the light, because the sky is light” (2011, 129). Similarly, when people saw in the early modern amphitheatres, they did so *in* the sky.

The sky in these amphitheatres was two-fold. There was the actual sky, which was continually in formation, shaping the visual experiences of each living being in the theatre, and the sky of the heavens above the stage, which remained static throughout. The audience in the yard and perhaps the lower gallery—who could see the underneath of the heavens—were always at the interface between these two versions of the sky. As early modern theatre scholars, we occupy a similar position to these audience members. Do we understand the sky as a ceiling with furnishings that sits above and illuminates the ground—the stage on which we live? Or do we look beyond, like Ingold, to the unceasing world of luminosity in which beings are immersed? If we are truly to understand what seeing a play was like in these playhouses, we must insist on the latter.

## Indoor Playhouses

If seeing in the Elizabethan and Jacobean amphitheatres was to inhabit the weather, then how did people see in the indoor playhouses? The most obvious difference is that people would have been free from the weather, which no doubt would have been desirable during the winter months. Depending on the lighting conditions, seeing indoors can also be a more individualistic experience than in an outdoor public space. Andrew Gurr argues, for instance:

[i]n the confinement of an enclosed space where you feel comfortably freed from any effect of weather and have your own passive sitting space, you can much more easily feel yourself as an individual, separate from the others around you, conscious of your identity as a free and perhaps sceptical observer of the events you have paid to witness. This is particularly the case when you sit in the dark. (2010, 8)

It was for this reason, Gurr suggests, that outdoor and indoor playhouses were distinguished as “public” and “private,” respectively. Certainly people paid more to attend the indoor playhouses. The fact that indoor playing became the dominant form of theatre over outdoor playing by the mid-seventeenth century—a trend that still continues today—makes it likely that early modern audiences also enjoyed the relative tranquility, not to mention the less-tightly packed auditorium, of the indoor playhouses (Gurr 2010, 9).

Seeing in the indoor playhouses was defined by immersion in a different, and more controllable, kind of light to the outdoor playhouses. I hesitate to argue that each indoor playhouse had similar lighting environments as these environments were determined by the location of the building, the size and quality of the building’s windows, and the type of artificial lighting employed in these venues. For now, I will explore two broad possibilities. The first is that indoor performances were illuminated by a combination of daylight and candlelight that remained relatively consistent throughout. The second is that windows could be shuttered, allowing playing companies to experiment with lighting. I want to keep in mind, however, that within these two general versions of indoor playing rests another set of variables, because the kind of light people inhabited in these indoor playhouses changed from day-to-day, performance-to-performance, and playhouse-to-playhouse. We should thus heed Martin White’s warning that

“we must be careful to avoid establishing general principles” when it comes to lighting at the indoor playhouses (2014, 126).

Let us explore the first scenario then, where indoor playhouses were illuminated by daylight and candlelight, with the only change in illumination coming with the passage of time and the general fluctuations of the candles as they burned. I think it is fair to say that although seeing in such an environment was always in flux as people inhabited light, these variations were less dramatic than if the windows were shuttered and playing companies experimented with light. It is very difficult to know the exact ratio of daylight to candlelight in the indoor playhouses, and theatre scholars have varied opinions on the matter. In response to the documentary evidence from Salisbury Court, which required the housekeepers to pay half the cost of candles used during the winter, Graves concludes that “[a] plausible interpretation of the facts is that summertime performances dispensed with much or even all artificial light and that wintertime performances relied on a mixture of natural and artificial light” (1999, 130). Candlelight, in Graves’ opinion, “was used primarily to help dispel winter darkness” (1999, 130). In a similar vein, Keith Sturges posits that “even on the most overcast days, daylight entering the playhouse would be so much brighter than candlelight as virtually to obliterate it, at least until early evening in winter” (1987, 44). However, Sturges’ conclusion fails to take into account the composition of early modern window glass, as I shall discuss shortly. Gurr acknowledges that these playhouses were illuminated by a confluence of natural and candlelight, but he concludes that candlelight was the dominant source of illumination. “Indoors the high windows in stone-walled playhouses like the Blackfriars provided some illumination, but the chief light came from the candles,” he posits (2009, 216). Part of the reason for the preference of candlelight, Gurr believes, was to help accentuate clothes that “glittered in candlelight whereas in the open air they lost their shine” (2009, 217). White also concedes that “[g]eneral illumination in the indoor playhouses came from two sources: daylight through windows and artificial light, mainly from candles” (2014, 116). Yet he warns that suggestions these windows accounted for much of the overall illumination,

ignore the extent to which the daylight would have been reduced once the benches in the front of the windows were occupied, and how the upper gallery itself would have significantly reduced even further the spill of light on to the stage. (2014, 177)

White makes an extremely important point here because although it seems likely that Jacobean playhouses had windows, the positioning of these windows in relation to both the sun and the interior of the playhouse determined the extent to which natural light could provide illumination.

### **Early Modern Window Glass**

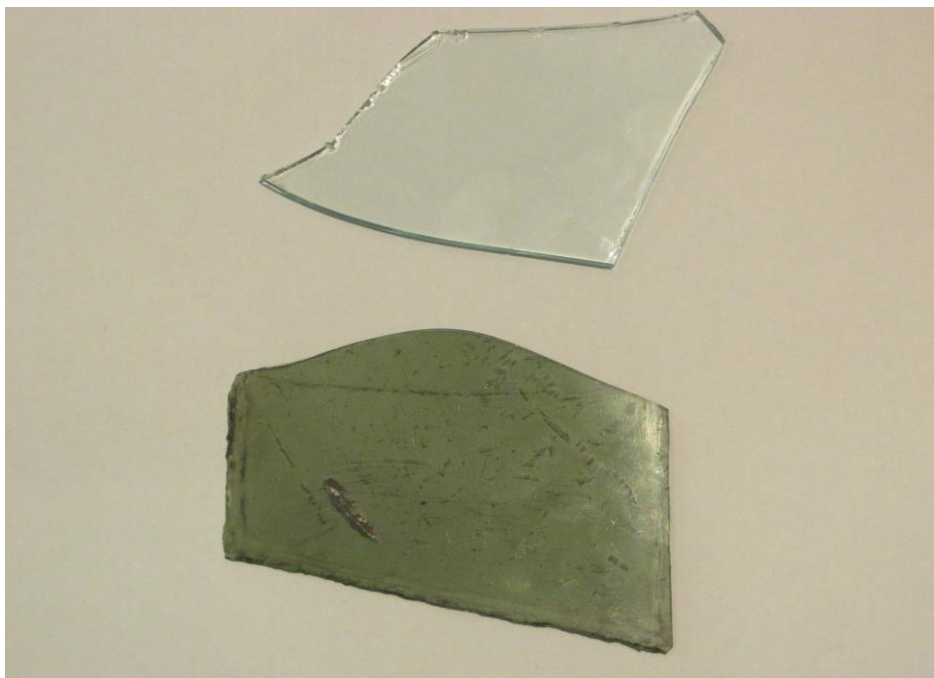
Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century window glass was vastly different to its modern counterpart, as David Dungworth's extensive work on historic window glass illustrates (2014; 2011). Early modern window glass was generally green, due to the materials used in production (see figure 1.1). "Earlier manufacturers," Dungworth notes, "often tolerated sands with significantly greater proportions of iron, which gives a green or blue-green colour or tint to the glass" (2014, 10).

Glass blowing techniques were dependent on human respiration, and therefore, it was impossible to make large sheets of glass (2011, 24–26). These small panes meant that quarries of glass were normally joined together by lead to create a window (see figure 1.2). Dungworth suggests that panes always had some air bubbles and "tears" caused by dripping from the furnace ceiling (2014, 10). The combination of these factors significantly restricted the transparency of window glass.

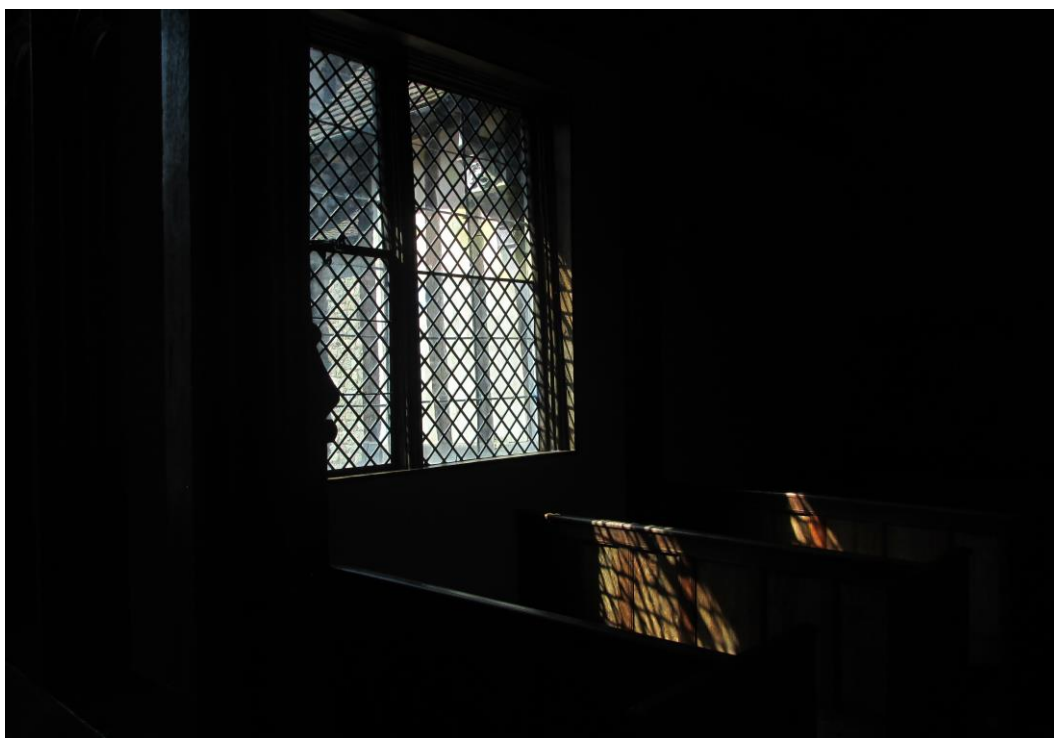
Dungworth argues, therefore, that the purpose of window glass in this period was not so people could see in or out, but rather to provide some light, while also offering protection from the weather (2014, 15). Ultimately, he says:

The small size of the panes, the strips of metallic lead used to join the panes together and the greenish quality of the glass itself all contributed to a window that would provide much less light than a modern window and which could give only a rather distorted view of the outside world. (2014, 14)

To me, it seems likely that candlelight was not simply a supplement to daylight in the indoor playhouses, but it was actually necessary in order to provide a sufficient lighting environment for the audience to see *in*.



**Figure 1.1:** Early modern window glass. The top pane is dated from the late 20th century. The bottom pane dates from somewhere between 1550 and 1700 (photo by author; glass provided by Dr. David Dungworth)<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 1.2:** Window in the New Chapel at Ightham Mote, a 14th-century Manor House. The window glass is a mixture of original, early modern, and later glass (photo by author)

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<sup>6</sup> I am extremely grateful to Dr. David Dungworth (Head of Archaeological Conservation and Technology, English Heritage) for sharing his expertise on early window glass, as well as making regular trips to London (armed with glass samples) to discuss the topic in person.

Interestingly, documents from performances at Guild Halls and both Oxford and Cambridge Universities contain regular references to broken window glass. White conjectures that these cases may have been accidental and “resulted from the proximity of bodies and glass” (2014, 117). Certainly early modern window glass was thin and fragile in comparison to modern window glass, so it presumably could be damaged quite easily. Yet, as Dungworth notes, window glass was also a valuable and portable item, so it is likely that owners took measure to protect glass as much as possible (2011, 41). I discussed these references with Andrew Gurr in a meeting at Shakespeare’s Globe, during which he alerted me to the references to broken glass in Guild Hall performance records. He suspects that these occurrences may have been deliberate, either to let more light into the halls or to see in from outside the buildings. Since the documents themselves offer no explanation for the cause of these broken windows, we can only speculate as to how and why they were damaged. We could even hypothesise that the desire to shutter windows was not simply to enhance the effects of candlelight, but also to protect window glass from further damage.

### **Indoor Stage Lighting**

Irrespective of the amount of daylight that entered the indoor playhouses, they certainly required artificial light as well. *The Wits* frontispiece (1662), which displays two chandeliers hanging on either side of stage, is often used as a source of evidence for stage lighting in the indoor Jacobean playhouses. John H. Astington, however, argues that although some of the iconography in the frontispiece suggests that the drawing may be a reimagining of an earlier theatre, it certainly does not depict any theatre in particular (1993, 122–40). Graves notes several pieces of evidence for stage chandeliers suspended above the stage at the early modern private playhouses, much like the stage depicted in *The Wits* frontispiece. Thomas Overbury for instance, refers to “a kind of walking Epilogue between the two Candles,” which Graves argues were more likely chandeliers than wall sconces (1999, 180–81). In *The Two Merry Milkmaids* (1620), one character says, “Pray



haue care of those lights be not offensive vnto the Ladies, they hang suspiciously” (1999, 182). Later in the period, Samuel Pepys referred to his eyes “being sensibly hurt by the two great lights of the playhouse” (1910, 645). White cites examples of chandeliers from European theatre in the period for evidence that they existed in the English playhouse (2014, 118). Although it seems likely that these playhouses had lights hanging above the stage—as this would have been the most effective form of lighting—I hesitate to state that it was a universal practice as much of the evidence for the practice at the English indoor playhouses comes from later in the period.

Court performances certainly used chandeliers, more commonly referred to as “branches.” White notes that records from performances at court suggest that wire was used to stretch across the hall in order to hang the chandeliers as well as pulleys to raise and lower them (also see Graves 1999, 160–67). He also implies that chandeliers were quite expensive, since “records show that chandeliers at court were more often repaired than replaced” (2014, 120). Light was an altogether different phenomenon at court masques than at the private playhouses. Ben Jonson’s elaborate masques, occasionally designed by Inigo Jones, have several stage directions calling for coloured lights (Graves 1999, 168). In his essay “On Masques,” Francis Bacon wrote:

Let the scenes abound with light, specially coloured and varied; and let the masquers, or any other, that are to come down from the scene, have some motions upon the scene itself, before their coming down; for it draws the eye strangely, and makes it, with great pleasure, to desire to see, that it cannot perfectly discern. (2011 [1905], 782)

These effects were commonly used on the continent, and most likely achieved by shining light through coloured bottles filled with water (Graves 1999, 168–69). Many of the staging practices employed at court were not applied at the indoor playhouses, mainly due to expense. At court, beeswax candles were more widely available, allowing playing companies to perform in light that required less maintenance than in the indoor playhouses. I, therefore, choose to focus on the commercial playhouses in this thesis because court performances catered to a wealthy elite who had access to lighting materials that most people in early modern England did not. It seems that

elaborate illumination, using expensive oils and materials, was another form of conspicuous consumption at court. For an ordinary member of the public in early modern England, the kind of lighting effects employed at court would have been astonishing. Moreover, most early modern plays were written for commercial playhouses and the practices they housed, whereas performances at court were merely occasional. I suspect that focusing on court staging practices can be somewhat misleading when we come to consider the conventions of commercial indoor playhouses. Court was a sub-climate, a world only available to a small minority of people. The lighting procedures for court performances catered for the expectations of the elite, but they did not reflect the world that most people inhabited.

Although Graves, Sturges, and Gurr may differ on the exact ratio of daylight to candlelight in the indoor playhouses, they all agree that there was no effort to experiment with the general lighting environment, even if the windows had been shuttered. Graves suggests, for example that “no playtexts indicate that candles were dimmed or extinguished to give the impression of darkness or night, nor, conversely, that additional lights were lit to present brightness” (1999, 197). Thus, he concludes that “[a]rtificial light served to accentuate the extremes of the fluctuating daylight, but it made possible no major effect that could not be achieved by daylight alone” (1999, 200). Similarly, Gurr argues that “at neither playhouse [amphitheatres or halls] was there any thought of using darkness to conceal the playgoers from the players or from themselves” (1996, 47). According to Sturges, some indoor performances took place “wholly by candlelight,” but, like Graves, he concludes that due to the lack of evidence in stage directions for experimentation with light, “it seems that the lighting design was non-existent or extremely rudimentary in the private theatre” (1987, 46–47). If we are to follow the models of Graves, Sturges, or Gurr, then lighting in the indoor playhouses was functional rather than artistic. If there were chandeliers in these playhouses, they would likely have remained at the same height throughout performances. Thus, although the fictional events of the play

jumped between various outdoor and indoor, diurnal and nocturnal locations, the performance space was always in light.

However, in the second lighting scenario—where playing companies could experiment with light by shuttering windows, and perhaps extinguishing candles—it was possible that audiences occasionally saw *in* darkness. The main evidence for the shuttering of windows in hall playhouses comes from an analogy in Thomas Dekker’s *The Seuen Deadly Sinnes of London* (1606), in which he writes that “all the Citty lookt like a private Playhouse, when the windows are clapt downe, as if some *Nocturnal*, or dismall *Tragedy* were presently to be acted before all the *Tradesmen*” (D2v; original emphasis). According to Graves, Dekker implies that windows were shuttered prior to the start of a performance, and most likely remained in that position throughout. The analogy, Graves suggests, has “little to do with reducing the amount of daylight” and rather may simply refer to the common practice of shuttering windows at night (1999, 155). Dekker’s analogy, however, is not the only reference to shuttering windows for theatrical performance in the period. For a performance at Oxford during Charles I’s visit in 1636, the chancellor of the university “caused the windows of the Hall to be shut, the candles lighted, and all things made ready for the play to begin” (White 2014, 117). Thus, it was possible the some, if not all, of the indoor playhouses had means to shutter windows and block out daylight.

In response to both pieces of evidence above, White refers to German architect Joseph Furttenbach’s work on theatre, written in the years between 1627 and 1663, which notes that windows should be shuttered prior to the start of the performance. As a result, White argues that Furttenbach’s reference “might imply that the windows let in light and air while the audience settled and were then shuttered to create more advantageous conditions for candlelight” (2014, 17). Whether shuttering the windows was an artistic decision or simply a common practice, once they were closed, candlelight became the sole source of illumination in these indoor spaces. If performances commenced in the afternoon at the indoor playhouses, starting approximately at 2 p.m. like the amphitheatres, then by late afternoon it would have been dark as these

performances took place during the winter. Consequently, as the play progressed, candlelight increasingly became the predominant source of illumination even if the windows were open (White 2014, 118). Interestingly, Stern argues, using references to “night” in prologues and epilogues, that productions at the Blackfriars were more often than not performed in the evening, in an attempt to resemble court performances (2014, 108–09). If she is correct, candlelight would have been the sole source of illumination in these playhouses.

The commercial playhouses would have most likely used tallow candles, as beeswax was significantly more expensive (Graves 1999, 23). Tallow required regular maintenance; Graves posits that “a two- or three-hour performance in a hall theatre lit by several dozen of these inferior tallow candles could, therefore, require hundreds of individual snuffing operations” (1999, 14). However, Gösta M. Bergman suggests that “since the tallow candles could not very well be snuffed at short intervals, it follows that the strength of the light on the stage actually varied considerably during the course of performance” (1977, 55). Whether performances included regular snuffing or deteriorating illumination, the spectacle and rhythm of performance at the indoor playhouses was certainly dictated by the functionality of the candles.

The development of inter-act breaks in the indoor playhouses was a direct consequence of the need to maintain the candles. Gurr notes that “in the hall playhouses pauses in action were essential if only to give time for attendants to trim the candles that lit the stage or replace them” (2009, 217). These breaks were often filled with musical interludes and dancing, a practice initially developed by the children’s companies. In fact, Gurr suggests that these breaks became a convention of outdoor playing after the King’s Men acquired the Blackfriars in 1608 (2009, 217). He also proposes that because early modern audiences were accustomed to simultaneous staging at the amphitheatres, these breaks were kept as short as possible. “Even in the indoor theatres,” he writes, “act-breaks were designed to last the length of no more than thirty lines of verse, little more than a minute” (2009, 218). However, in a slightly later piece, Gurr adjusts this conclusion to “roughly two minutes” (2010, 15). Hirrel, in contrast, argues that the lengths of these breaks

varied depending on the length of the play itself (2010, 176). Although these act breaks existed, there is really no way of knowing exactly how long they lasted, or whether acting companies used them to suitably prepare the playhouse for the upcoming act.

Dekker's analogy, Charles I's visit to Oxford, and the development of inter-act breaks do not necessarily imply that playing companies experimented with candlelight once the windows were shuttered. Graves, Sturgess, and Gurr all conclude, for instance, that even with the windows shuttered, light remained constant throughout performances. White, on the other hand, speculates:

Once raised, the chandeliers were for the most part likely to remain at a constant height above the stage throughout each act. However, as they were installed with gear that enabled them to be raised and lowered, it seems inevitable that the company would have noticed the variation in the light levels depending on their height above the stage and taken advantage of that to create different effects. (2014, 125)

We cannot be sure whether early modern playing companies experimented with light in these playhouses, but we do know that it was possible. These playing companies were certainly inventive, and experimented with a variety of other stage effects, like sound and song as well as stage blood, smoke, and cannon-fire. Theatre historians, however, seem reluctant to attach the same level of inventiveness to lighting. Gurr, for instance, is happy to suggest that playing companies experimented with sound at the indoor playhouses, most notably for *The Tempest* at the Blackfriars:

*The Tempest*, the first of Shakespeare's plays clearly composed for the Blackfriars, makes much more use of off-stage music and on-stage song than any of his other plays. This innovation to the Shakespeare range came from knowing that the King's Men had acquired the Blackfriars consort of musicians along with the theatre. The sudden fury on stage of the storm that opens the play would have made a drastic and startling contrast after the harmonious music that had preceded it. Later in the play music comes back into its role, serving to soothe the wildness of the characters hostile to Prospero's peace. (2014, 205)

Yet despite the acoustic possibilities opened up by the move from outdoors to indoors, Gurr resists the idea that playing companies would have similarly explored the possibilities of light in these spaces. Such resistance, I argue, does not correspond with the adaptability and innovation

of the early modern playing companies. Whether these companies experimented with light on a large scale is highly doubtful, but it seems likely that at some point they would have explored the possibility of lighting in the indoor playhouses, as they did with other staging effects.

### **Virtual Nocturnalisation**

Perhaps we can gain a greater sense of how playing companies utilised their playhouses by looking at the performance of nighttime on both the outdoor and indoor stages. In his study of nighttime in early modern Europe, Craig Koslofsky argues that the modern experience of nighttime began in the mid-seventeenth century with what he terms as the “nocturnalisation” of daily life. He suggests that by the end of the 1600s, “manifestations of nocturnal fear were coming unmoored from their basis in everyday experience: the night and its spirits were becoming less frightening” (2011, 18). Part of the reason for this change in attitude, he suggests, was the establishment of consistent street lighting in early modern cities (2011, 128–56). As the seventeenth century progressed, we find that life began to spill into the dark hours: labour extended into the evening, regal court entertainments lasted well into the dark hours, and nocturnal celebrations and events increased. Although “nocturnalisation” was a phenomenon that began in the late seventeenth century, its foundations can be traced to the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century theatres. For an individual who was familiar with a dark world that limited vision, the theatre allowed night to become a visual phenomenon. Perhaps part of the allure of going to a play was to observe worlds that were normally inaccessible to the average citizen. Whether it was a King’s court, a manor house, or a foreign land, the theatre made these environments locally accessible. Nighttime was no different. Whereas most people retreated into their domestic spaces at night, in the theatres everyone was able to inhabit a version of nighttime that did not evoke the vulnerabilities people felt in actual darkness.

Starting with the amphitheatres, we must then ask how these playhouses created fictional nocturnal environments without any effective or reliable means to darken the stage. Alan C.

Dessen provides an extensive overview of the various conventions used to establish nighttime on stage (1984, 70–83), in which he notes:

The first and most obvious tool, of course, is dialogue, for characters often tell us or each other about night or darkness (as in Hamlet's "'Tis now the very witching time of night'—III.ii.373); as with other kinds of relevant information (e.g., about locale or time), the words spoken by the actors serve as the primary vehicle for signaling stage light and darkness. (1984, 70–71)

Implicit within dramatic dialogue are signifiers for both actors and audiences. For actors, dialogue directs them around the stage, prompting them to sit, walk, stand still, and so on. For audiences, language establishes when and where these fictional events take place. Dialogue was often accompanied by material signifiers of a particular lighting environment, such as handheld lighting devices for a night scene. Graves argues that “stage property lights carried by actors produced their effect not so much by illusionistic means, as by serving as emblems that signaled such information as when or where a scene takes place” (2009, 529). Similarly, White suggests that linguistic signifiers were backed up material signifiers of nighttime. “[L]anguage was often supported by the use of a signifying property such as a taper, torch or lantern, and enforced through costume, ... stage action and the actor's behavior,” he proposes (1998, 128). Not only did the introduction of handheld lighting devices establish a dark environment, but they also helped signify the kind of locale the characters inhabited. Certain lights were used in particular locations and situations, as I discussed in Chapter 1, and these uses in everyday life transferred onto the early modern stage. White also observes that costuming reinforced the nocturnal environments set up by linguistic and materials signifiers. Stage directions regularly called for actors to enter in nightgowns and the like, or even in a state of undress.

Actors also placed their characters in darkness through movement, as David Bevington suggests:

The absence of theatrical lighting means that darkness is conveyed to the spectators by movements and groupings of costumed actors as well as by their dialogue: by nightwear, by torches and torchbearers used not for illumination but as signals of darkness, by the stated inability of the actors to see one another, by fearful or surprised encounters, by stealth, tiptoeing, and the like. (1984, 125)

Presumably the audience implicitly recognised these movements from their personal experiences of inhabiting nighttime. For Michael Witmore, this symbiotic relationship between the movements of actors on stage and the response of audiences is one the common features of theatrical experience:

Actors are, in an odd way, the reflexive sense organs of the theatre, creatures who manifest certain feelings but also *register* those feelings in the vast sensorium of the play. What is happening in spectatorship, then, is a kind of structural mimesis of this process that is occurring in the actor, as well. (2012, 421)

By placing the characters that they play *in* fictional environments, such as nighttime, actors on the early modern stage were simultaneously placing audiences, to a certain extent, in the same environment.

In response to the various techniques used to established darkness on the early modern stage, Dessen notes:

For us [in a modern theatre], the lighting technician supplies stage night and the actors perform accordingly; for them [early modern audiences], the actors provided the signals and the audience co-operated in supplying the darkness. For us, one figure fails to see another because the stage is dark (or nearly dark); for them, one figure failed to see another and therefore the stage was assumed to be dark. (1980, 4)

What we experience in a modern theatre is a simulacrum of nighttime, an attempt to replicate the actual reality of a nocturnal environment. What occurred in the early modern amphitheatres was a deliberate artifice, a way of establishing darkness on stage through displays that bore little resemblance to the actual experience of nighttime. Jeremy Lopez observes, for instance:

When the language of the play most insists on the invisibility of characters, objects, and locations, the action works most vigorously to call our attention to these things: dark scenes tend to fill the stage with characters, to use all of its levels, to underscore the importance of props, to maximise the potential visible, physical space. (2003, 106)

In the early modern theatres, Lopez notes, techniques used to display on stage nighttime were vastly at odds with actual experiences of nighttime in the period. What occurred, then, on the early modern stage was a kind of “virtual nocturnalisation,” where, paradoxically, the sight of an



actor displaying the effects of darkness engulfed the characters and audiences in an imaginary darkness.

### **“Here” and “There” (Stage Realism)**

Logic suggests that the inability to perform any of the naturalist techniques associated with modern theatre on the early modern stage meant that the artifice of theatre was self-evident for early modern audiences. Gurr, for instance, continually asserts that the respective conditions of playing in the period meant that the audience were always aware that what occurred on-stage was fictional:

When what we call Elizabethan drama got going in the 1580s and 1590s excessive realism was a constant concern. Metadrama, the explicit acknowledgement that a stage-play was a work of illusion, where boys played girls who dressed as boys, is only the cream on the many-layered cake the players fed to their audiences. They were rarely allowed to forget that they were engaged in a con-game in which they were willing participants. (2009, 7–8)

To back up this point, Gurr suggests that given its association with witchcraft, illusionism was always to be avoided on stage (2009, 7). He notes, however, that stage realism was attempted in the early modern theatres. He records that materials like vinegar (used as a semblance of blood), smoke (used to portray fog and mist), and off-stage sounds, such as horse trotting, cannon-fire, and bird calls (used to portray localities) were all attempts to add reality to the spectacle (2009, 224–26). Nonetheless, he argues that “[r]ealism of this kind was by no means uniform, of course. It appears usually as a special effect designed to intensify the inherent comedy or tragedy of a situation” (2009, 226). Consequently, Gurr posits that the conditions of playing at both the outdoor and indoor theatres in the period meant that the “awareness of illusion as trickery was ... close to the surface all the time” (2009, 221).

Gurr’s suggestion is certainly plausible. The ability of modern theatre and particularly cinema to create a sense of realism is dependent on the separation of the audience from the actors, mainly by the former occupying light and the latter inhabiting darkness. The inability of early modern theatre, therefore, to perform this separation must have meant that the illusion was

plainly obvious for all to see. Yet, as Graves points out, “[t]o Shakespeare’s public, there was nothing jarring about being as much in light as the actors and, hence, no dislocation of normal sensibilities and no shocking reminder of the artifices of the theater” (1999, 109). Furthermore, the recognition of an event as an illusion does not necessarily prevent the event from being felt as a reality, a point that Bridget Escolme makes. “It is possible to conjure theatrical illusion,” she writes, “while at the same time making evident the work behind the illusion, its conditions and means of production” (2005, 11). For Witmore, the phenomenon that Escolme describes can be witnessed in the palpable feeling of wanting to “interrupt” a play in order to stop the onstage events unfolding:

I would wager that anyone who actually wants to interrupt tragedy in performance—who wants to hold the mirror to Cordelia’s mouth after Lear has given up, or to interrupt Iago as he is pouring poison into Othello’s ears—does so because he or she has come to occupy the same position as the actors with respect to the actions they are performing. (2012, 421)

We may know that the actors perform fictional roles, and that any manipulation on the part of Iago, for instance, is only confined to the fictional space of the play. But recognition of that fact may not stop us from feeling that the fictional event has real consequences. In fact, part of the attraction of theatre-going is the experience of being immersed in a fictional event. Of course, modern theatre has the ability to create realistic versions of actual environments through the use of elaborate stage sets and lighting, but given early modern audiences had no other media to compare their experiences of drama to, then I suggest that we cannot be sure they did not feel the obvious illusion of their theatres as a reality.

Let us take the example of virtual nocturnalisation, discussed in the previous section. In the shared illumination of the outdoor theatres, any kind of onstage darkness was imaginary. Gurr suggests that “[w]ith unlocalised staging and freely variable ‘scenes’ all that the poet had to do was slip in a reference early on in each scene to the locality to be imagined if he wanted anywhere specific” (Gurr 2009, 220). Similarly, Arthur F. Kinney argues that “given Shakespeare’s utilisation of daylight, he draws upon the material conditions of his playhouse to

invigorate the imagination of his playgoers” (2003, 29). Although nighttime was established through linguistic and material signifiers in the early modern amphitheatres, I am not sure the relationship between events on stage and imaginary darkness is as rational and clear-cut as Gurr and Kinney speculate. Audiences certainly imagined darkness, but what exactly did that mean? Crucially, the imagination is not solely a mental phenomenon. When I drift into an imaginary world, I am still in my body and my body is still in the world—my body is not dormant at this point. Thus, there is a *real* part of me that is in the imaginative reality because the act of imagination is immanent to my inhabitation of the actual environment, of which my body is “merely the stabilized structure,” to borrow Merleau-Ponty’s phrase (2010, 373). Thus, to imagine is to inhabit a world that is neither entirely here nor entirely there; it is in fact, it is both. “Here” is the actual environment I inhabit—the light I see in, sounds I hear in, and so on. “There” is the incorporeal environment I have mentally constructed. “There” can only ever exist in relation to “here.” The incorporeal aspect of imagination is always in reference to the experience of inhabiting an actual environment—it is “there” because it is not “here.” It is precisely for this reason that imagination cannot be disembodied; I cannot imagine an alternative reality without being present in an actual reality.

When audiences in the early modern amphitheatres imagined characters wandering around in darkness, they did so amidst the sky, noise, and weather of these outdoor environments. From within this inhabitation of the actual environment, they constructed the imaginary world of the characters on stage. Thus, when Escolme suggests that we can “conjure theatrical illusion while at the same time making evident the work behind the illusion,” she implies that audiences can be both here and there. In fact, on some occasions in the early modern theatres, the very recognition of “here-ness” actually intensified any sense of “there-ness” amongst the audience, as Lopez noted with the increase of the visual in night scenes. Brett Gamboa calls this phenomenon “the paradox of the audience, wherein the audience grows more susceptible to the fiction, more impressed by a sense of the real, the more the fiction advertises

its artifice” (2013, 671). In this sense, night scenes on the early modern stage were always in a paradoxical state.

While Gurr argues that the awareness of illusion was “close to the surface all the time” in the early modern playhouses, I propose instead—in line with Gamboa and Escolme—that drawing attention to the inherent artificiality of dramatic performance may have actually heightened the sense of realism for early modern audiences. Although playing companies could not darken the stages at the early modern amphitheatres, by increasing the visual spectacle—at odds with actual experiences of darkness—they may have actually increased the reality of an imagined darkness. Thus, it was through seeing characters display the effects of darkness—in the daylight of the early modern amphitheatres—that audiences came to imaginatively inhabit the darkness along with the characters.

### **Dramaturgical Light**

Gurr tells us that dramatists simply mentioned a particular locale and the audience imagined this location, but the ability to retreat into a reflective or imaginative realm at the early modern amphitheatres must have been extremely difficult. For one thing, audiences were tightly packed together, particularly in the yard, and were certainly less docile than modern theatregoers, as Dekker implied earlier. These theatres were noisy, smelly, and cramped. If we imagine trying to retreat into a reflective realm on a tightly packed London Underground train at rush-hour, we may in some way understand the experience of standing in the pit at the early modern amphitheatres. It is entirely possible that audiences did not see or hear certain signifiers of location and time because they were more concerned about their immediate environment. Moreover, standing in the weather may have made it a lot more difficult to concentrate on the action. There is a reason why contemporary theatre (including cinema) takes place primarily indoors because in these conditions it is easier to focus on the action. Perhaps the relationship between early modern plays and the responses of their audiences was more nuanced than a

simple transaction between the action on stage and the interpretative skills of the people watching, in the same way that relationship between an object of vision and an observer is more complex than the interpretation of mental images.

The presumption that early modern audiences were aware of the inherent artifices of theatre also depends upon the idea that both they and the actors were always in light. Although audiences in the late sixteenth century may have become accustomed to the shared illumination of the amphitheatres, by the late Jacobean and Caroline period, they may have been used to a more fluid version of theatrical lighting, perhaps even the practice of shuttering the windows and extinguishing the candles. I do not know whether playing companies experimented with light at the indoor playhouses in early modern England, but I do know that several dramatists gave serious consideration to light in the composition of their plays. In the following chapter, I explore three case studies, ranging from the late Elizabethan to the Caroline period, where light plays a fundamental role in a play's dramaturgy.

# 3

## Lighting the Theatre: Case Studies

In this chapter I test the hypothesis that at least some playwrights used light to create certain dramaturgical effects in the early modern period. It is difficult for us to know whether playing companies actually extinguished candles or raised and lowered chandeliers to perform lighting effects in their playhouses. However, we can carefully examine playtexts from the period for clues that playwrights considered lighting in the composition of their plays. I start anachronistically with John Webster's famous complaint against the Red Bull after the unsuccessful staging of *The White Devil* in 1612 because I would like to explore the relationship between outdoor and indoor venues before I go on to look at indoor venues exclusively. I follow the Webster case study with an examination of John Marston's work with the Children of Paul's in the late Elizabethan period, before finishing with a discussion of plays performed at the Cockpit playhouse in the 1630s. The case studies deliberately span a wide time frame: from the children's repertories at the small indoor playhouses of late Elizabethan and early Jacobean London to the adult repertories at the commercially competitive indoor venues of the Caroline period. This range enables us to examine whether indoor lighting practices evolved over the course of the early modern period.

## [Case Study 1]

### *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*

In publishing this Tragedy, I do but challenge to my selfe that liberty, which other haue tane before mee; not that I affect praise by it, for, *nos hæc nouimus esse nihil*, onely since it was acted in so dull a time of Winter, presented in so open and blacke a Theater, that it wanted (that which is the onely grace and setting out of a Tragedy) a full and vnderstanding Auditory: and that since that time I haue noted, most of the people that come to that Play-house, resemble those ignorant asses (who visiting Stationers shoppes their use is not to inquire for good bookes, but new bookes) I present it to the generall view with this confidence.

— John Webster, “To the Reader,” *The White Devil* (1612, A1v)

In order to understand John Webster’s complaint against the Red Bull in the original publication of *The White Devil* in 1612, we must first of all consider the reputation and architecture of the Clerkenwell amphitheatre more generally. Webster’s complaint taps into a common disparaging narrative about the Red Bull that permeates both early modern and contemporary discussions of the theatre. A full understanding of the unsavoury reputation of the Red Bull also allows us to compare the more sophisticated and exclusive reputation of the indoor Blackfriars playhouse, the venue for Webster’s most famous tragedy, *The Duchess of Malfi*, in 1613. Each theatre had a repertory that reflected its reputation, with the Red Bull famous for bombastic and extravagant performances, and the Blackfriars synonymous with domestic comedies and tragedies. *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, however, are very similar tragedies, both dealing with themes of deception, love, family, and murder. Moreover, *The White Devil* requires some intricate staging, especially in terms of lighting, which would have been difficult to perform at the outdoor Red Bull. Thus, *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* are particularly interesting case studies because they are similar plays that took place in radically contrasting theatres.

The architectural differences between the Red Bull and Blackfriars also had a significant effect on the respective styles of performance in the theatres. The former required generic staging

practices employed across all the outdoor theatres, whereas the latter lent itself to more subtle and specific staging practices. In short, at the Red Bull the playing company had to adapt the play to the theatre, with fewer possibilities to experiment with light. At the Blackfriars, however, the playing company could adapt the playhouse to the play, to a certain extent, using the lighting and acoustic environments to create specific effects.

### **Performance Space (1): The Red Bull Playhouse, 1612**

Webster's complaint about the Red Bull and its audience was not unique in the early modern period, for as Marta Straznicky argues, "with remarkable consistency throughout the early modern period, Red Bull playgoers are characterised as unlettered, ignorant, or possessed of a crass literary sensibility" (2006, 144). G. E. Bentley similarly notes that "violence and vulgarity seem to be the usual association with the Red Bull" (1941–68, 6: 247). Yet there is significant evidence to suggest that the Red Bull's stature was comparable to London's other major outdoor playhouses. Gurr notes that "the three amphitheatres that won the authority of licensing under King James were the Globe, Fortune and Red Bull" (2009, 148). John H. Astington argues that the resident playing companies at the Red Bull and Fortune playhouse—Queen Anne's Men and Lord Admiral's Men, respectively—competed commercially with the King's Men at the Globe:

In the first decade of the [seventeenth] century, like their colleagues in the King's Men they [Queen Anne Men's and Lord Admiral's Men] both had star actors who could attract audiences—Thomas Greene and Richard Perkins at the Bull—and actor-playwrights who could sustain a developing repertory. (2006, 132)

Perhaps the Red Bull has been victim to Shakespeare-centric studies of early modern theatre, where the Globe and the King's Men are seen as the benchmark for all other playhouses and playing companies, a point that Astington makes when he writes that "[t]he Red Bull is a convenient and habitual low-water mark against which to measure the traditionally high tide of the Globe and the Blackfriars" (2006, 130).



In an issue of *Early Theatre* (9.2), articles by Straznicky, Astington, Lucy Munro, and Anne Lancashire provide in-depth studies of the Red Bull's performance history as well as expose the critical deficiencies in traditional views of the Red Bull as unsophisticated venue. Straznicky's article shows that the attribution of published plays to the Red Bull was at least on par, and even surpassed the Globe (2006, 145–46). Furthermore, she cogently argues:

[I]n terms of typographic design and the use of marketing devices, all of the plays published with a Red Bull attribution are no less self-conscious about their status as literary works than plays like *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, *The White Devil*, or *Albuzar* [three plays that criticised or mocked the Red Bull's audience]. (2006, 148)

Addresses to readers, Straznicky observes, were often aimed at “an imagined audience of unusually broad social and occupational range” and documents on the ownership of the playhouse confirm that “gentry were among the patrons of this repertory” (2006, 150).

Ultimately, Straznicky concludes that “it would be highly irregular if these particular playbooks were produced without some sense that a significant proportion of the audience for the Red Bull repertory was not only literate but actively interested in reading editions of the play” (2006, 151).

More recently, Eva Griffith's monograph on the Red Bull and the Queen Anne's Men sheds new light on the playhouse (2013). She suggests that “[c]ritics have looked down on the Clerkenwell venue for housing only riotous apprentice/citizen audiences and have had little time for it as a place of serious entertainment, a perspective I would query” (4). She continues, “[n]ot only is there a scarcity of accounts from which to draw a coherent history of the Queen's Servants, but lying alongside what exists is a strange set of warped, subjective perceptions” (10). In a similar vein, Richard Rowland argues that the assumption that theatregoers at the Red Bull or Fortune were “ill-educated, prone to violence, capable of understanding ... nothing but inexplicable dumbshows and noise” whereas audiences at hall playhouse like the Blackfriars were “wealthy” and “intellectually sophisticated,” has no basis in the evidence offered by playtexts and performance histories (2012, 18). In fact, Rowland suggests that social disorder was commonplace at almost all the playhouses in the early modern period (2012, 19). Griffith notes

that the location of the playhouse in the socially diverse suburb of Clerkenwell, which housed some affluent and high-ranking officials, was “not an area that would be ever want to be seen to house or encourage misdemeanour by the actors or anyone else” (2013, 23). There is little evidence, therefore, to support the common denigration of the Red Bull and its audience.

The Red Bull certainly had a reputation for boisterous and spectacular performances. Gurr argues that “[t]he Red Bull was more inclined to favour spectacle than Shakespeare was, so the Red Bull plays contain a greater use of properties of all kinds amongst their stage effects” (2009, 188). The prologue to the play *The Two Merry Milkmaids*—performed at the Red Bull in 1619—implies the kind of reputation that Gurr alludes to:

All that are hither come  
To expect no noyse of Guns, Trumpets, nor Drum,  
Nor Swords and Targuet; but to heare Sence and Words,  
Fitting the Matter that the Scene affords.  
So that the Stage being reform'd, and free  
From the lowd Clamors it was wont to bee,  
Turmoyl'd with Battailes; you I hope will cease  
Your dayly Tumults, and with vs wish Peace. (1620, A2v)

Presumably, the playing company had to forewarn the audience that the proceeding play was different in style to the theatre's usual performances. Furthermore, Alexander Leggatt suggests:

[I]t is possible that the *Two Merry Milkmaids* prologue also marked the return of an old company, the Company of the Revels (formerly Queen Anne's). If so, it presents a parallel case of a troupe that knew the Red Bull audience facing it with some trepidation. (1992, 205: note 28)

Rowland notes that although the prologue implies a somewhat sedate performance, the play actually contains several scenes that require the use of descents and traps, and ends with a song and dance. “It is unlikely,” argues Rowland, “that this ‘rumbustious popularism’ did offend the spectators at the Red Bull; it does not seem to have affronted the dignity of the Jacobean court either, where the play enjoyed at least one outing” (2012, 34). Rowland makes an important point here: the repertory of the Queen's Servants was not solely confined to the Red Bull as often these plays were also performed at court and, later in the Jacobean period, at the indoor Cockpit playhouse (*The White Devil* being one of these plays).

Owing to this reputation for the spectacular, Griffith argues that the playing style of the Queen Anne's Men tapped into both a national and European consciousness:

The Queen's Servants' period at the Red Bull coincided with a renewed interest in the martial, embodied in a national admiration for heroes like Sir Philip Sidney and Prince Henry, but also taking in the Stuart prince's European family and the effect of their visits, for example. This interest took in the impressive magnificence of 'Dansk Drummers', Danish fireworks experts and the new foreign order that Queen Anna represented. A European flavour was associated in many minds with readiness for Protestant military action, and early Red Bull/Queen's Servants auditors, many of them practising their skills with the trained bands, must have relished 'Sword and Targuet' practice exercised on stage with many large-scale battle and sword-fight scenes. (2013, 17)

In a similar vein to Griffith, Astington argues that the playing style of the Queen Anne's Men was a deliberate ploy, and "the jibes about the terrible tear-throats at the northern playhouses miss the point; it wasn't that the actors didn't know better, but they were quite deliberately keeping alive a broader, showier, declamatory tradition" (2006, 131). Certainly, stage directions from Red Bull plays, like Heywood's *Ages* plays, which call for flying entrances and exits, imply that the Red Bull had the capability to create spectacular visual and aural environments. Mark Bayer argues, for example, that the "the vast majority of plays [from the period] calling for fire, fireworks, burnings, or fireballs were performed by Queen Anne's Men at the Red Bull" (2011, 169; 173).<sup>7</sup>

As with several of the adult playing companies, clowning was a major part of the Queen Anne's Men's repertory. For instance, in *Greene's Tu Quoque*, performed at the Red Bull in 1611, the characters discuss which playhouse to attend, with special mention given to Thomas Greene, the clown for the Queen Anne's Men:

RASH: Why you couragious Boyes, and worthy Wenches, made out of Waxe. But what shall's doe when wee haue dinde, shall's goe see a Play?  
 SCATTERGOOD: Yes sayth Brother: if it please you, let's goe see a Play at the Gloabe.  
 BUBBLE: I'care not; any whither, so the Clowne haue a part:  
           For I sayth I am no body without a Foole.  
 GERALDINE: Why then wee'le goe to the Red Bull; they say *Green's* a good Clowne.  
(1640, F2v)

Seemingly, the Red Bull was a prominent part of early modern London's theatre scene, with an extremely adept playing company under royal patronage, and a reputation for the spectacular.

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<sup>7</sup> See Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thompson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions of English Drama*, 39, 92–93.

Although the Queen Anne's Men had a unique style, it was not any less sophisticated than the King's Men at the Globe, given the fact that both playing companies often performed at court. Perhaps, then, instead of thinking of the Queen's Servants as poor cousins of Shakespeare's company, we should think of them as contemporaries with distinct playing styles.

Compared to the other popular amphitheatres of Jacobean London, little is known about the physical structure of the Red Bull. In his discussion of the architecture of these theatres, Graves marks the Red Bull as "no evidence is available" (1999, 92). Similarly, in *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, Bentley records that "less is known of the building of the Red Bull theatre at the upper end of St John's Street, Clerkenwell, than of the Fortune or the Globe or the Hope" (6: 215). As a result, Leggatt concludes that "we are confined to guesswork about the playhouse as a whole" (1992, 20). At the end of the seventeenth century, James Wright's *Historia Histrionica* mentions that "The *Globe*, *Fortune* and *Bull* were large Houses, and lay partly open to the Weather and there they alwaies Acted by Daylight" (1699, 7). With its status as a major London playhouse then it is a safe assumption that the Red Bull was a large theatre. Griffith provides as detailed an account as possible of the physical structure of the playhouse (2013, 93–107). From a survey attached to a 1679/80 lease of the site, she notes that the yard was "quadrilateral" in shape, measuring "57 feet on the north side, 57 on the west side, roughly 56 feet on the canted side and 67 on the east side"—larger than the yard at the Globe (96–99). In Griffith's opinion, the playhouse "could hold 3,000 upwards" (99). Moreover, Bayer suggests that the substantial number of actors on stage in scenes from Thomas Heywood's three *Ages* plays—performed between 1611 and 1613—required a large stage (2011, 169–70). Likewise, the use of simultaneous staging in *The White Devil*, along with the sixteen actors that enter at the beginning of act three, scene two, demanded a relatively large stage. Munro notes that "amphitheatres such as the Red Bull were well suited to large-cast plays and were well-equipped for the production of special effects" (2006, 102). In this vein, Griffith suggests that because of the demands of certain plays, such as Heywood's, the playhouse "had a good, strong tiring-house, with ambitious 'heavens,'

braced with winching machinery” (2013, 103). Thomas Dekker’s *If This be not a Good Play, the Devil Is in It*—performed at the Red Bull in 1611—certainly required a large stage as it calls for the use of trap doors, fireworks, music, thunder, and lightning to mark the entrance of devils (Leggatt 1992, 6870). Using evidence from playtexts, Mariko Ichikawa concludes that the Red Bull “stage had two doors, a discovery space between them, a balcony, a trap and a roof equipped with a descent machine and supported by posts” (2013 8). In many ways, Ichikawa’s description of the Red Bull bears resemblance to the theatre depicted in the Swan Drawing (1596), and I suggest that in terms of the Red Bull performance space, De Witt’s sketch is an apposite starting point. The position of the stage within the playhouse is hard to pinpoint as it very much depends on the location of the tiring house. Griffiths concludes that the stage could have been either in the south-west, north-east or north-west of the playhouse. Of course, as I noted in Chapter 2, the location of the stage determines whether it was in light or shade during performances.

In his note to the reader, Webster complains that the original performance of *The White Devil* took place in a dull and dark theatre in front of an ignorant audience. Yet since the Red Bull seemingly had both the size and stage-effects as well as a well-regarded resident playing company, to compete commercially with both the Globe and the Fortune playhouses, can we take Webster at his word? There is no doubt that an audience attending a performance at the Red Bull expected a particular style of performance, but that does not necessarily mean they were ignorant or unsophisticated. Moreover, inhabiting dull and overcast conditions in these amphitheatres must surely have been a relatively regular occurrence for early modern audiences, particularly during the winter. In the Cambridge edition of Webster’s plays, David Carnegie suggests that Webster’s note to the reader “describes a dramaturgy that relies on speech more than spectacle, and on an auditory rather than spectators” (1995, 98). Perhaps, then, the original lack of success for Webster’s tragedy had more to do with the style of the play than the performance conditions at the Red Bull.

## Performance Space (2): The Blackfriars Playhouse, 1613

We can understand more about *The White Devil* at the Red Bull when we compare it to the performance conditions for *The Duchess of Malfi* at the Blackfriars a year later. The title page to the 1623 edition of *The Duchess of Malfi* tells us that “As it was presented priuatly, at the Black-Friers; and publicquely at the Globe, By the Kings Maiesties Seruants” (A1). References to Sidney’s *Arcadia*, reprinted in 1613, and the fact that the actor who played Antonio, William Ostler, died in December 1614, mean that the play must have been performed between 1613 and 14 (Gibbons 2001, xxxvii). The Globe burned down in June 1613 and was not rebuilt until the following year, so it is most likely that the play was initially performed by the King’s Men at the indoor Blackfriars in 1613 before moving onto the outdoor stage in 1614. Although the King’s Men were predominantly an outdoor playing company until they acquired the Blackfriars playhouse in 1608, they had significant experience performing at court in the early 1600s and, as Martin White argues, they “already had a decade of seeing how the companies of child actors, including the Children of the Queen’s Revels who occupied the Blackfriars, used the indoor space they had now recovered” (2014, 115). It is, therefore, reasonable to believe that by the time Webster’s second tragedy was performed in 1613, the company was able to maximise the potential of the indoor space.

The Blackfriars was most likely square in shape, but as Oliver Jones points out, Ben Jonson’s *The Magnetic Lady* and the prologue to *The Wits* imply a rounded or hemispheric structure (2014, 68). Jones concludes that there were at least two galleries, and possibly a third from the reference to a “middle region” in Marston’s *The Dutch Courtesan* (68). The width of the stage would have been reduced by the stage boxes, as Gurr notes, and given the fact that “well-dressed feathered and sword-wearing gallants” sat on stage stools during performances, he concludes that “the acting space was certainly cramped” (2009, 195). Jonson’s *Poetaster* required a central trap, Jones posits, and *Cymbeline* needed machinery for descents from the heavens (70).

Both Jones and Gurr imply that, in many ways, the indoor stages retained many of the same features as the outdoor stages.

Jones also challenges Irwin Smith's conclusion that the Blackfriars had a hammer-beam roof. The internal measurements for the inner cloister, according to Jones, suggest that it could not accommodate buttresses for the weight of such a structure. Moreover, the Jacobean hall roofs that Smith uses for evidence for the hammer-beam structure were built one hundred and fifty years after the original Blackfriars building (2014, 67). Jones proposes, therefore:

[I]t was more likely that the Blackfriars roof used an aisled construction ... and that the supporting posts and bay divisions would have had to be incorporated into Burbage's design when he came to fit out a new theatre in 1596. (2014, 68)

The roof offered welcome protection from weather conditions, but the lack of consistent and sufficient daylight through windows, as discussed in Chapter 2, meant that the stage space would have required artificial lighting, most likely in the shape of stage chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

The move indoors transformed the skillsets of playing companies and their actors. Voice and movement both had to be adjusted for the smaller, enclosed, and socially elite indoor venues (Bloom 2007). Given the fact that the King's Men performed both outdoors and indoors from 1609, their actors had to be not only skillful at both venues but also adept at moving between the relevant skillsets required for the Globe and the Blackfriars. Within a year of its debut at the Blackfriars in 1613, *The Duchess of Malfi* was performed by the King's Men at the Globe. Presumably several actors played the same roles when the play moved to the outdoor stage, which meant that they had to adjust their performance styles accordingly for the outdoor playhouse. One of the key adjustments for these actors was to the more malleable lighting practices of the indoor playhouses.

### Lighting Darkness and Playing in the Dark

The indoor playhouses were naturally darker, even with the use of artificial lighting, and *The Duchess of Malfi* is often considered a play that suited these darker conditions. In his case study of the play, White argues that “[n]o Jacobean theatre professional could surely have resisted the opportunities offered to stage this most terrifying of plays in an atmosphere that would have matched it perfectly” (2014, 136). Gurr also speculates that “[t]he glitter of candlelight in a general aura of darkness is thought by critics today to give a peculiarly apposite atmosphere to *The Duchess*” (2010, 19). Yet the fact that the play was also performed at the Globe suggests that it did not require elaborate lighting conventions in order to be successful.

There is a general assumption that after the King’s Men acquired the Blackfriars, they developed two distinct and overlapping repertoires in the process. Roslyn Knutson, however, questions whether the King’s Men had a distinct “Blackfriars repertory” at all (2006). She argues the plays performed at Blackfriars were essentially an extension of the King’s Men’s Globe repertory (57–58). Whereas Gurr posits that after 1615 the Master of Revels “only ever chose plays for performance at Court that came from the indoor playhouse,” Knutson shows that many of these plays were also performed on the outdoor stage. Thus, Knutson persuasively argues that the King’s Men’s acquisition of the Blackfriars did not engender a new indoor repertory, but rather enabled a repertory that “could be successful on both stages” to emerge (59). *The Duchess of Malfi* is a play that fits Knutson’s theory. Perhaps Webster’s tragedy was not written specifically for the Blackfriars in mind, but rather for the King’s Men, who Webster knew performed at both venues. Nevertheless, the respective performance conditions of the Globe and the Blackfriars meant that the play might have been staged rather differently at each venue.

Knutson suggests that “[The King’s Men] could count on having plays new at one venue new again when they made the switch from one playhouse to another” (59). *The Duchess of Malfi* is a good example of how the King’s Men could make plays “new” again in the transition between outdoors and indoors, or vice versa. The “dead hand” scene (4.1), where Ferdinand insists on



meeting his sister in darkness and presents her with a dead hand to kiss, is a good example of the phenomenon Knutson describes. In the Cambridge edition of the play, the editors conclude:

The removal of lights prior to his entry and their recall as he leaves reinforces the theatrical conventions of the time. The playhouse was fully lit all the time, whether simply by daylight (Globe) or augmented by candles (Blackfriars). The introduction of torches or candles signified darkness; in this case, their removal indicates total darkness, but of course the spectators still observe a fully lit stage. (1995, 638)

Similarly, Graves suggests:

Whether the point of this scene was shock or suspense, whether the darkness was only symbolic or was suggested by a slight diminution of light near the actors, the scene works best when played in enough light to allow the audience to see what is going on. (in Dessen 1984, 77)

Both Graves and the Cambridge editors argue that playing companies preferred lighting darkness, as it were, because it meant that “the audience could see and respond to the visual media of the actor’s craft” (Graves, quoted in Dessen 1984, 77). However, White posits that the King’s Men shuttered windows and extinguished candles for this scene:

At the Blackfriars (certainly for all but those closest to the stage), it is likely that spectators would have been as uncertain as the Duchess as to what was going on, and so been as horrified and shocked as she at the revelation of the dead man’s hand. In other words, the Blackfriars audience would have experienced Ferdinand’s behaviour from the Duchess’ point of view. At the Globe, however, where presumably the audience could see what Ferdinand was doing, they would observe the cruelty enacted upon her. (2014, 136)

For Graves and the Cambridge editors, the King’s Men kept congruent skillsets between the playhouses, meaning that there were no huge differences between the staging of plays indoors and outdoors. Yet, as I implied in Chapter 2, the King’s Men were keen to experiment with sound, music, and other staging conventions when they moved indoors, so it is not beyond the realms of possibility that they experimented with playing in darkness.

If the King’s Men shuttered windows and extinguished candles for the original performance of *The Duchess of Malfi*, then it was not only the “dead hand” scene that altered between the Blackfriars and Globe performances. For instance, when Antonio drops a piece of paper and then exits, the stage directions reads: “[Bosola] *searches with a lantern and finds paper*”

(2.3.57.sd). On the Globe stage, the audience would have been able to see the paper the character searches for, despite the best efforts of the actor to display otherwise. Yet on a darkened Blackfriars stage, the lantern would have had a very real purpose for both actor and character. The actor playing Bosola would have needed the light to find the paper on the stage, aligning his needs with the character he played.

The actor also required a different skillset for performing night scenes at either playhouse. On the outdoor stage, lighting was determined by conditions outside the control of playing companies, which in some way took the pressure of the actor as he could rely on the fact that pretty much everyone in the playhouse could see him. On the indoor stage, however, the actors themselves may have been their own lighting designers, with the way that they carried lights determining who could see what in the playhouse. Performing in the dark was perhaps a skill that adult playing companies developed in the Jacobean period, and in doing so, they may have laid the foundations for an acting style that became a general practice on the Caroline stage, as I shall discuss in case study 3.

### **The Performance of Night-walking**

Rather than risk recounting the debates about why *The White Devil* was more suited to the Blackfriars than the Red Bull, I want to compare instead how the respective lighting environments of the playhouses affected the performance of nighttime on stage, in particular the practice of walking. In the opening chapter, I discussed the etymology of the term “night-walking.” I found that while the term was strongly associated with thieves and villains in the early modern period, by the twentieth century it simply referred to sleep-walking. I also considered the physical action of “night-walking” in the period. In walking at night, people gathered a form of kinaesthetic knowledge that conditioned their conceptions and understandings of nighttime. On the early modern stage, actors regularly walked at night, except this “nighttime” was often lit by

daylight or candlelight. Unlike actual night-walkers, whose movements were often invisible, onstage night-walking was very much visible.

In a scene from *Sir John Oldcastle, Part 1*—performed by the Lord Admiral’s Men at the Rose playhouse in the late 1590s—King Henry, and Lords Suffolk and Huntington enter disguised, carrying lights. When Suffolk and Huntington suggest to the King that he return to bed as the city is well guarded, the King replies, “I thank ye, lords; but you do know of old / That I have been a perfect night-walker” (11.19–20). But what did it mean to be a “perfect night-walker” on the early modern stage? Through their bodies, actors had to display the physical actions of walking in nighttime. Whether these displays bore any resemblance to the ways in which people actually walked at nighttime is hard to know. But certainly, the audience would have implicitly recognised that the actor’s movements meant the character was walking at nighttime (especially in conjunction with material and linguistic signifiers of nighttime). Of course, how actors walked also depended very much on the characters that they played. A thief might tiptoe through the environment, whereas a night-watchman might stride. Not only did the character determine the kind of walk an actor employed, but also the kind of light he carried. A villain could carry a dark lantern, whereas an officer could enter with a torch. Each of these lighting instruments impacted the actor’s movements. A lantern, for example, would be carried at face-level with a bent or hooked arm. In George Peele’s *The Famous Chronicle of King Edward the First* (1593), the Potter’s wife asks another character, “will it please you to carrie the lantern a little handsommer, and not to carrie it with your handes in your slops” (K1r). A torch, however, would be held further away from the body, and above head height, with a straighter arm. Many of the same conventions would have been used on the indoor stage, but the smaller stage would have restricted the distances actors could walk.

In several early modern plays, the characters that regularly walk at nighttime are often deceptive and manipulative. In a recent article, Bruce R. Smith argues that “[i]n multiple respects, character is a function of space” (2013, 37). Using *Hamlet* and *King Lear* as examples, he explains:

Hamlet the character inhabits all of *Hamlet* the play's fictional locations (battlements, throne room, bed chamber, grave yard) as well as locations beyond the scenes (Wittenberg, the North Seas, England, the infinite space evoked in his speeches). In this respect, Hamlet occupies more space than any other character in the play. The situation is more complicated still in *King Lear*: Cordelia, banished with her husband to France, occupies a larger fictional space than her castle-bound sisters do, but it is Lear, cast out onto the heath, who inhabits the largest space of all. In this respect, as in others, Lear is the largest character in the play. (2013, 36)

It is no surprise that Hamlet and Lear dominate events, Smith suggests, given their domination of fictional space in respective plays. Similarly, in *The White Devil*, Flamineo dominates the events of the play, mainly with the frequency that he appears on stage, as David Gunby observes:

With Flamineo, complex, intelligent, and self-aware, the clarity of presentation derives from the frequency with which he speaks, either to others or in soliloquy [...] Flamineo's soliloquising provides insights which reinforce the understanding of his character and motivation gained from his continual commentary on the actions and motives of others. (1995, 59)

Compared to the other characters, Flamineo is extremely knowledgeable about nighttime (e.g. 1.2.181–83; 1.2.291–92; 4.2.204). He is also very comfortable in darkness. As I noted in Chapter 1, people who inhabited nighttime were often branded as thieves and vagabonds. By proxy, Flamineo is associated with these kinds of people. His comfort at night is also in stark contrast to Vittoria's husband, Camillo, who warns, "You must watch i'th nights, / Then's the most danger" (2.1.359–60). In fearing nighttime, Camillo also unwittingly fears Flamineo. Camillo is encircled by darkness both fictionally and characterologically, to follow Smith's logic; it is, therefore, no surprise that he succumbs to Flamineo's plot to kill him.

For the actor from the Queen Anne's Men playing Flamineo (possibly Richard Perkins), nighttime was a completely visual phenomenon, since both he and the audience could see one another. Some stock movements for actors portraying night-walking on stage, as Alan C. Dessen notes, included actions such as tiptoeing, moving slowly, or groping in the dark (1984, 72–75). For example, in *Captain Thomas Stukeley* (1605), most likely performed on the outdoor stage in the late 1590s (Edelman 2005, 34), a stage direction reads: "*Enter O'Neill, O'Hanlon and Mackener (softly as by night)*" (7.0.sd). The fluidity of these movements very much depended on the character

that an actor played. For example, the actor playing Flamineo might have walked differently during night-scenes to the actor playing Camillo, given the characters' respective experiences and opinions of nighttime. Like artificial lights on the outdoor stage, these walking styles signified where the scene took place and the type of characters involved. Although the audience would have recognised these movements as walking at night, the fact that it took place during the day presumably removed any anxieties normally attached to the physical action. Night-walking on the outdoor stage, therefore, bore little resemblance to the actual experience of walking at night in the period.

In *The Duchess of Malfi*, nighttime is the setting for some of the play's most significant events: the marriage of Antonio and the Duchess (1.1), Ferdinand presenting the Duchess with a dead hand (4.1), the execution of the Duchess and Cariola (4.2), the death of Antonio (5.4), and the deaths of Ferdinand and Bosola (5.5). Ferdinand and Bosola are the most villainous characters in play, and it is no coincidence that in all six night scenes, and the two prison scenes, either Bosola or Ferdinand or both are present. Much like Flamineo in *The White Devil*, Ferdinand and Bosola are comfortable inhabiting darkness. At the beginning of act two, scene three, for example, Bosola enters with a dark lantern—an instrument associated with malevolent characters, as I discussed in the opening chapter. Antonio accuses him of being “a night-walker” (2.3.24), to which Bosola disingenuously responds that he is simply on his way to say his prayers (2.3.25–29). Similarly, Ferdinand “comes i'th'night” (4.1.24) to visit the Duchess and tells her that “this darkness suits you well” (4.1.30). Gunby suggests, however, that “it is he [Ferdinand] whom the darkness suits; it was he who requested it, unable to face his sister without its protection” (1995, 393). At one point, Ferdinand says, “I'll goe hunt the Badger by Owle-light: / 'Tis a deed of darknesse” (4.2.321–22)—inferring that it is a deed suited to his character.

Interestingly, the two nocturnal events that Ferdinand is absent from are the marriage of Antonio and the Duchess (1.1.347–486) and the birth of their first son, which occurs offstage. It is news of these two events that fuels his anger and quest for revenge. Of course, Ferdinand has

his own convoluted reasons for executing the Duchess and Antonio, but in many ways he desires to reclaim his control of nighttime. When he comes to see the Duchess later in the play (4.1), his requirements are that she meets him in darkness (24–25). His insistence is significant for two reasons. First of all, darkness allows him to deceive his sister with the dead hand (43.sd) and the wax models of Antonio and the children (54.sd). Secondly, darkness enables him to reassert his control over the events of the play. It is highly significant, I think, that when Ferdinand feels at his most threatened, he reverts to what he knows best: darkness.

When Ferdinand tells the Duchess that she was “too much i’the’light” (4.1.41), he does not simply refer to her public image. Rather, he evokes many of the metaphorical representations of the light and dark dichotomy. By being-in-light, the Duchess represents concepts such as virtue, morality, integrity, and divinity. Ferdinand’s need to-be-in-darkness, on the other hand, represents the antitheses of the Duchess’ characteristics. Earlier in the play, Ferdinand’s desire to “fix her [the Duchess] in a generall ecclipse” (2.5.79) is essentially an attempt to “put out the light,” to use Othello’s words (5.2.7). Light is a threat to Ferdinand because it illuminates his vulnerabilities, and since the Duchess embodies light, he desires to kill her. In many ways, Ferdinand and his sister are antithetical: male and female, brother and sister, deceitful and honest, vengeful and defiant, irreligious and religious, hellish and heavenly, *dark* and *light*.

For night-walking on the Blackfriars stage, the actor playing Ferdinand in 1613 would have displayed many of the same skills as an actor on the outdoor stage. The smaller space obviously restricted movement, but in candlelight, night-walking was still a visual display. The role of handheld lights indoors, however, may have impacted how an actor walked. Unlike the outdoor stage, where handheld lights were merely signifiers, a handheld light on the indoor stage would have helped illuminate an actor’s face or a specific part of the stage, even in full candlelight. As he walked, an actor presumably had to be more conscious of how he carried a torch, lantern or candle than he did on the outdoor stage. Moreover, if the playhouse was darkened, then how an actor walked with a light on stage carried even greater importance as his

movements determined what the audience could see. More often than not, the actors carrying these lights played attendants with minor speaking roles. Yet by carrying lights on stage, these seemingly unimportant characters became central to the performance. That is, the role of the actor was two-fold: one, he had to display the fact that his character, or the other characters, were walking at night; two, he had to make sure the audience could see these displays.

Certainly *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* took place in different perceptual environments, even if the King's Men did not experiment with light at the Blackfriars. For the former, the actors and audience were immersed in the weather and daylight. Webster's reference to an "open" theatre implies that the audience was open to the extremes of the weather. White argues that the implications of Webster's note to the reader are clear—"the play needed to be performed in a warm, indoor theatre with a judicious audience capable of listening to and understanding it, in other words, at the Blackfriars" (2014, 132). Perhaps Webster's criticism was less to do specifically with the Red Bull and its audience, and more a criticism of outdoor playing in general. Perhaps he saw his style as more suited to the intimate and more socially elite Blackfriars. I think it is interesting that he refers to the audience as an "Auditory," implying that his play was more an aural than a visual phenomenon, which certainly suited the indoor performance space more than the outdoor equivalent. It is possible that Webster wanted to turn theatrical space outside in with the *White Devil*, as he did a year later with *The Duchess of Malfi*. Yet such a conclusion depends on the assumption that the King's Men had an exclusive Blackfriars repertory, as Knutson points out.

Certainly playing companies had to adjust their playing style to the respective conditions at the outdoor and indoor playhouses, but this fact did not necessarily mean that particular plays were more suited to one venue or the other—*The Duchess of Malfi* must have suited both stages. Perhaps the skill of the King's Men was their ability to straddle the divide between outdoor and indoor performances. The ability to do so, Knutson argues, would have been commercially advantageous to the playing company (2006, 59). The implications of Webster's frustration with

the Red Bull and its audience may have little to do with a desire to have *The White Devil* performed at the Blackfriars, since he knew that plays often had to be commercially viable both indoors and outdoors. Perhaps instead, the popular image of the Red Bull as an unsophisticated venue with an unlearned audience gave Webster something to attack after the play's initial failure. It is as likely that Webster simply wanted his play to be performed at any other theatre, outdoor or indoor, than the Red Bull.



## [Case Study 2]

### *Antonio's Revenge* at Paul's Playhouse, 1600

John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* may represent the first experimentation with light in early modern commercial theatre. Performed by the Children of Paul's c.1600 at the playhouse located in the precinct of St Paul's, each act of Marston's revenge tragedy requires a specific lighting atmosphere, supplemented by numerous entrances and exits of handheld lights on stage. In his edition of the play, Reavley Gair argues that "*Antonio's Revenge* was created as an experimental production for a 'little theatre'" (1999, 40). However, the actual consequences of Marston's experiment have yet to be fully documented, particularly when it comes to lighting. This oversight is partly due to the fact that discussions of indoor playing conventions have focused largely on the playhouses where the adult companies resided, most notably the King's Men at the Blackfriars. As a result, the Children of Paul's have been viewed as an occasional amateur company without the skills or sophistication of the professional adult companies. I think such conclusions undermine the potentially radical staging conventions of plays such as *Antonio's Revenge*. In order to fully understand the consequences of Marston's experiment at Paul's in 1600, I first consider the physical features of the playhouse as well as the skills of its resident playing company. Secondly, I look at Marston's relationship with the playhouse at Paul's prior to 1600, by comparing the role of light in *Antonio's Revenge* to Marston's previous plays at the venue, in particular *Antonio and Mellida*. Finally, I analyse the role of the Pages in *Antonio's Revenge*—who enter with lights on several occasions in the third act despite having very minimal speaking roles. I suggest that it is not so much their appearance on stage that is interesting as what occurs when they exit the stage. On each occasion, shortly after the Pages exit the stage, the Ghost of Andrugio enters. Through the entrances and exits of the Pages, Marston creates a recurring system of lighting for the scenes involving the ghost.

### Paul's Playhouse and the Children of Paul's

Paul's playhouse was a small venue in comparison to the other indoor playhouses of early modern London. John H. Astington notes:

Audience figures in the thousands, featuring all social classes as well as the socially deviant, belonged to the large outdoor playhouses; one of the attractions of the Paul's Boys' performances for those wanting a rather more intimate experience was the considerably smaller size of the auditorium and hence the audience it held. It seems unlikely that the audience at Paul's could have been made up of more than a couple of hundred people even under the most packed conditions: Paul's was one of the smallest of contemporary playing venues. (2014, 16)

From the existing documentary evidence, Gair concludes that the ground floor auditorium was 440 square feet and the building itself had a backstage area of roughly the same size (1999, 27).

Herbert Berry, however, suggests that according to Hollar's plan of the cathedral, the almonry which housed the playhouse was about 92 feet long and 32 feet wide. He concludes that the theatre was approximately "29 feet wide inside and much longer" (2000, 112). Although the exact dimensions of the playhouse are difficult to ascertain, it was certainly smaller than the Blackfriars and Cockpit playhouses.

Gair provides a detailed discussion of the general features of the playhouse—in fact, he suggests that Marston played a part in renovations of the playhouse in 1599 (1982, 58–61). He posits that the stage had two storeys, given the fact that *Antonio's Revenge* requires an "above" space (3.2.75.sd), with the stage balcony also housing the musicians. Gair argues that a section of the stage balcony could be curtained off as a discovery space. He also suggests that the stage was originally built without a trap, but this was added prior to the performance of *Antonio's Revenge*. He claims that the stage had three doors, with a large double door at centre. To complete the stage, Gair argues that a staircase, visible to the audience, was added in 1604, which "must have seriously decreased the already limited acting space on the main stage and made entry from at least one of the doors rather difficult" (1982, 60).

In the "Induction" to Marston's *What You Will* (1607, A2r–A3r), performed by the Children of Paul's in 1601, the players discuss the diminutive size of the stage. "Lets place our

selues within the Cur-taines, for good faith the Stage is so very little we shall wrong the generall eye els very much,” one player states (Q1, A3r). Stage-sitting was a regular practice at both the outdoor and indoor venues. In *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, for instance, performed by the Children of the Queen’s Revels at the Blackfriars in 1607, the Citizen and Wife introduce the play and remain sitting on stage. However, the Induction to *What You Will* suggests that stage-sitting was not a possibility at Paul’s due to the small stage, as both Keith Sturgess and Gair note in their respective editions of Marston’s play (1997, xiii–xiv; 1982, 58). Perhaps stage-sitters on Paul’s stage obstructed the view of the audience, particularly those in the side galleries, or perhaps simply, stage-sitters would have left very little playing space for the actors.

Importantly, the Induction also provides an indication of how the playhouse was illuminated. Three characters enter (Atticus, Doricus, and Phylomuse) and the stage directions read that “*they sit a good while on the Stage before the Can-dles are lighted, talking together, & on suddene Doricus speakes. Enter Tier-man with lights*” (A2r). The stage directions imply that the tireman lighted the playhouse in two stages. First of all, he must have lit some of the candles offstage, perhaps on the stage balcony or from the upper gallery. He then enters the stage in order to light or bring on other candles. There were presumably only a handful of candles at the side and back of the stage given its size, and probably only one or two chandeliers above the stage. Perhaps the tireman lit the chandelier(s) from above the stage then lit the onstage candles afterwards. It is possible, therefore, that for some scenes the tireman only performed one of these tasks, either lighting the chandelier(s) or the onstage lights.

In terms of natural light, there appears to have been little, if any. Gair speculates that performances started between 4 and 6 p.m. because the Children of Paul’s “found themselves in a building always in need of artificial light, whatever time of day” (1982, 118). Gurr suggests that the space above the stage at Paul’s had a balcony or a window (2009, 200). Similarly, Gair posits that there existed small casement windows on either side of the upper level (1982, 78–60).

Mariko Ichikawa, however, doubts whether the stage had windows at all “because references to

windows in stage directions ... do not necessarily indicate the existence of windows.” Instead, she suggests that “the curtained alcove could well have served as the ‘casement’ and ‘window’ mentioned in these directions” (2013, 9). With little, or perhaps no, natural light, Paul’s Playhouse relied primarily on candlelight as a source of illumination. With the diminutive stage and relatively small lighting configuration in comparison to the Blackfriars, any alteration to the candles would have had quite a significant impact upon the overall lighting environment of the playhouse.

The experimental aspects of Marston’s plays at Paul’s have largely been ignored in contemporary theatre scholarship. One of the reasons for this oversight may be the status of Children of Paul’s. There has been a long-held assumption that the children’s companies were less sophisticated than the professional adult troupes in the period, mainly due to their amateur status. Astington, for instance, argues:

[T]he considerably smaller audiences at Paul’s plays were not bringing in sums comparable to the commercial playhouses, although the terms of the comparison are truly between an amateur and occasional theatre on the one hand and a professional operation on the other, playing as often as custom and authority allowed. (2014, 22)

Bart Van Es notes that there were three significant differences between the children’s and adult’s repertoires:

First, plays for children tended to emphasize the autonomy of their authors: allusions to poetic craft were common; many prologues explicitly recorded the intentions of the playwright; and the artifice of drama as a whole tended to place emphasis on the ‘written’ quality of these plays. Second, the children’s repertory was politically cynical. There was a suspicion of populist sentiment and a total exclusion of plays depicting national triumph. Third, plays at St Paul’s and Blackfriars had a youthful, masculine bias. They did not take marriage very seriously and were especially scornful of emotional outpourings from non-aristocratic women; sympathy tended to centre on impecunious gallants in opposition to the merchant class. (2014, 240)

I find Van Es’ conclusion far too generalised. Even a cursory glance at the Marston’s plays for the children’s companies shows that *Antonio’s Revenge* is as much a theatrical as it is a written piece and *Antonio and Mellida* finishes with the projected wedding of its title characters. R. A. Foakes has previously argued that “during the decade following their revival [1599–1609], the children’s theatres and the dramatists who wrote for them formed a major influence in determining the

course English drama was to take” (1970, 39). More recently, Lucy Munro builds on the work of Foakes, by arguing that both the children’s companies of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century shaped the repertory of the adult companies in the same periods (2007, 80–95). She cogently argues that children’s company tragedies such as *Philotas* (1604), *Bussy D’Ambois* (c.1604), and *The Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Byron* (1608) influenced the dramaturgy of Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*. She also notes that “[t]he relationship between *Hamlet* and Marston’s contemporaneous *Antonio’s Revenge* (1600) ... has long been debated, most scholars either acknowledging Marston’s play as a source for Shakespeare’s or arguing that Marston drew on Shakespeare” (83). Although the focus of children’s repertory may have differed to that of the adult companies, perhaps relying more on satire and comedy, that is not to say that the children’s companies could not perform the same plays as their adult counterparts.

In-depth studies of children’s companies, most notably by Munro (2005) and Edel Lamb (2009), counter the assumption that there were huge differences between the children’s and adult repertories. Munro argues that “the differences between the adult and children’s companies have been exaggerated” (2). She suggests that scholars who propose radical differences between the abilities of the children and adult troupes focus primarily on Marston’s *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio’s Revenge*, and Ben Jonson’s *Cynthia’s Revels* and *The Poetaster* as plays that refer to the adolescent bodies of the players involved (2005, 2). “In other respects,” notes Munro, “their techniques are analogous to those employed by the adult companies, for which many of their dramatists also worked, and they can be staged effectively with adult casts” (2005, 3). Similarly, in their edition of Marston’s plays, Macdonald P. Jackson and Michael Neill propose that “the Children of Paul’s [...] maintained a protective and comforting fiction of amateur status. Nominally choirboys, rehearsing plays before a casually assembled audience as part of their educational programme, they were in fact organised as fully professional companies” (1986, xii). In a similar vein, Lamb suggests that “[t]he children’s companies were not anomalies in early modern theatrical culture. They were an integral part of this realm and a crucial part of a wider

culture of children's performance" (15). Of course, there were differences between adult men and boys in terms of timbre and physical strength. Yet in many ways, as Munro implies, these differences were inconsequential. Often dramatists who wrote for children's companies also wrote for the adult troupes, and the fact that several of these plays were published suggests that playwrights took the business of writing for children's companies rather seriously.

### **"By this fair Candlelight"**

Prior to *Antonio's Revenge*, the Children of Paul's had performed two plays by Marston: *Antonio and Mellida* (1599) and *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600). *Antonio and Mellida* was the first play performed at Paul's playhouse since its closure in 1590, and its prologue carries an almost apologetic tone. "For wit's sake do no dream of miracles," the players warn the audience (4). Later in the prologue, the characters tell the audience, "When our scenes falter, or invention halts, / Your favour will give crutches to our faults" (32–33). Gair suggests that the "Induction" to the play—in which eight of the players enter with scripts as if in rehearsal—acted to forewarn the audience of the company's inexperience. "All of these choristers," he writes, "lack experience on the stage: Paul's has not operated as a dramatic company for some nine years, so there is no reserve of theatrical experience to draw upon." He continues:

The effect of this Induction played without properties, costume or scenic effect and conducted before the introductory music begins, is at once apologetic (with an implied request for the tolerance of inexperience) and invitational (soliciting response from the audience in guiding the future development of this theatrical enterprise). (1982, 119)

It is clear that *Antonio and Mellida* was a step into the unknown for Marston and the Children of Paul's, and what they learned in taking this step influenced subsequent performances at the playhouse. Since *Antonio's Revenge* was the sequel promised in the prologue to *Antonio and Mellida*—"I have heard that / those persons, as he and you, Feliche, that are / but slightly drawn in this comedy, should receive / more exact accomplishment in a second part" (163–66)—then it

is probable that the staging techniques of the sequel were in some way informed by the reception of *Antonio and Mellida* in 1599.

In terms of staging, *Antonio and Mellida* is not particularly innovative. On occasions, characters refer to the candlelit space. When Rosaline implies that one of the other characters has smelly feet, for instance, Balurdo responds, “By this fair candlelight, ‘tis not my feet” (2.1.69)—referring both to the torches that have entered the scene and the candlelit performance space. On a few other occasions, Marston uses candlelight as a trope (2.1.171–75; 3.2.8–16). Yet none of these conventions are new as plays on the outdoor stage used similar phrases and techniques. Perhaps what is interesting about *Antonio and Mellida* is not so much what is in the play, but what is not. As the Children of Paul’s gained valuable experience from performing for the first time in nine years, perhaps Marston also gained valuable insights into the staging techniques on offer at Paul’s Playhouse. Certainly the staging conventions employed in *Antonio’s Revenge* deviate significantly from those of *Antonio and Mellida*. As a step into the unknown, perhaps Marston and the Children of Paul’s took a safety first approach with *Antonio and Mellida*, keeping lighting and other staging relatively simple. Maybe, then, by the time Marston’s revenge tragedy was performed in 1600, both playwright and players felt more comfortable exploring the dramaturgical potential of the playing space at Paul’s.

The opening scene of *Antonio’s Revenge* is a far cry from the harmonious ending to *Antonio and Mellida*. Piero enters “*unbraced, his arms bare, smeared in blood, a poniard in one hand, bloody, and a torch in the other, Strotzo following him with a cord*” (1.1.0.sd). This staging would have recalled the image of Hieronimo in one of the period’s most famous revenge tragedies, Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*, who enters a scene “*with a poyniard in one hand, and a Rope in the other*” (G3v). Moreover, like Piero, the Ghost of Andrea opens the *The Spanish Tragedy* wandering “Through dreadfull shades of euer-blooming night” (A2v). Piero reinforces the atmospheric shift from the ending of *Antonio and Mellida* to the opening of *Antonio’s Revenge* by asking Strotzo, “Will I not turn a glorious bridal morn / Unto a Stygian night?” (1.1.88–89)—the proposed wedding at the

end of *Antonio and Mellida* (5.2.246–301) evolves into to the “Stygian night” that opens *Antonio’s Revenge*. Audience members who had seen Marston’s comedy a year earlier would surely have been shocked by Piero’s evocative entrance at the start of the play.

The fact that Piero enters with a torch in the opening scene of *Antonio’s Revenge* is also highly significant. The torch helps foreground the shift in genre from the light-hearted ending of *Antonio and Mellida* as Piero transforms from proud father to night-walking murderer. More importantly, the torch was the most luminous light source in the period, as I discussed in Chapter 1. In the small playhouse, a torch would have had quite a spectacular effect. In fact, as the play progresses, onstage light becomes an increasingly important factor in the narrative. By focusing on the role of light in act three, I suggest that Marston’s decision to dramatically shift genres between *Antonio and Mellida* and its sequel may have been fuelled by a desire to explore the possibilities of lighting at Paul’s Playhouse.

### **Act Three: Exit Pages / Enter Ghost**

Naturally, audiences, readers, and scholars tend to focus on characters who say or do something in early modern plays. Yet there are quite often characters who do or say very little, but they remain on stage for long periods. In fact, although stage directions tell us the characters that enter a particular scene, it is possible that more actors were on stage than playtexts imply. People of high social rank often had attendants with them throughout the day, and at night, these attendants often carried lights for them. In *The Duchess of Malfi*, for example, at no point do the stage directions call for either Ferdinand or the Duchess to carry lights, despite several of the scenes taking place at night; they always have attendants carrying lights for them. It is possible, therefore, that for several scenes, the main characters also had attendants with them on stage who were not listed in the stage directions. In the original quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), Mercutio calls for his Page and sends him to fetch a surgeon, to which the boy responds, “I goe my Lord” (E1v). Yet the stage directions at no point call for the entrance of a boy or page; we



presume, therefore, that he entered with Mercutio at the start of the scene (D4v). Perhaps the entrance of attendants was implicit in many scenes, and dramatists did not see the need to list these actors in the stage directions.

Often these seemingly superfluous characters are officers, kinsmen, courtiers, or servants; in *Antonio's Revenge*, they are Pages. Although the Pages seem redundant when reading the play, they perform a vital theatrical role in Marston's revenge tragedy. In the third act, two Pages regularly enter and exit the stage with lights (tapers and torches). In scene one, they enter with Antonio then leave the stage shortly after (3.1.7.sd). At the start of scene two, they enter and are immediately sent away by Maria (3.2.1.sd). Later in the scene, "*two boys*" enter with Piero (3.2.79.sd) and although the stage direction does not explicitly state that these boys carry lights, Piero says to them, "On, lights; away!"—presumably directing them to light the way for him. The stage directions refer to "boys" rather than Pages, but I think it is likely that these were the same boys who entered previously in act three. In fact, in the final lines of the scene, Piero refers to these boys as "Pages." "Away there! Pages, lead on fast with light!" he exclaims (3.2.91). At this point, all characters exit the stage, except for Julio and Antonio. At the start of scene four, the Pages re-enter and remain for almost sixty lines before exiting (3.4.59.sd). Of course the entirety of act three takes place at night and the torches the Pages carry signify this fact. However, it is not so much the presence of these torches that I find significant; it is rather what occurs when the Pages (and the lights) are absent from the stage: *Enter Ghost*.

On each occasion after the two Pages exit the stage in act three, the Ghost of Andrugio enters the play. In scene one, the Ghost of appears twenty-four lines after the Pages exit (3.1.31.sd). In scene two, the Pages exit early (3.2.1.sd) and the Ghosts of Andrugio (above) and Feliche (below) enter the stage later in the scene (3.2.74–76). The Pages re-enter with Piero (3.2.79.sd) and then exit at the end of the scene. The second scene runs seamlessly into scene three with Julio and Antonio on-stage without the Pages. The Ghost of Andrugio enters again (3.3.29.sd) before swiftly exiting (3.3.33.sd). At the start of the fourth scene, the Pages re-enter

with torches and remain on-stage for a relatively long period before exiting (3.4.59.sd). Again, after their exit, the Ghost appears in the discovery space (3.4.63.sd) and remains on-stage throughout scene five. At no point do the Pages and the Ghost of Andrugio occupy the stage simultaneously. Surely this fact is more than a coincidence. The Pages are certainly not essential to the dialogue or participants in the important action of the third act. In the first scene, they converse briefly with Antonio (3.1.4–5), but for the rest of the act they are silent. In scene four they are on stage for almost sixty lines without an utterance before they exit. Their presence on stage, therefore, was surely a staging rather than a narrative technique.

As I noted in Chapter 1, ghosts were strongly associated with nighttime in the early modern period. In fact, ghosts were often referred to as “night-walkers.” In Thomas Goffe’s *The Courageous Turk*, for instance, one character asks, “Shall I be scar’d with a Night-Walking Ghost; / Or what my working fancy shall present?” (1632, H3r). Similarly, in a treatise against witchcraft, Henry Holland writes that “Necromancers consult with nightwalking spirits” (1590, D4v). More often than not, when ghosts entered onto the early modern stage, they did so during night scenes. The ghost of Hamlet’s father, for instance, enters into the nocturnal opening scene of *Hamlet* (1.1.37.sd). Both the ghosts of Banquo and Caesar enter at night in *Macbeth* (3.4.36.sd) and *Julius Caesar* (4.2.326.sd), respectively, and as the King sleeps in the final act of *Richard III*, several ghosts enter in quick succession and speak to him (5.5.71–130). Ben Jonson’s *Catiline* opens with the entrance of Sylla’s Ghost, who asks, “Do’st thou not feele me, *Rome*? Not yet? Is night / So heavy on thee, and my weight so light?” (1.1–2). In the final act of *The Changeling*, Alonzo’s Ghost enters just after the clock has struck two in the morning (5.1.57). The staging of the ghost in the third act of *Antonio’s Revenge*, therefore, had a rich cultural significance and was certainly not an anomaly on the early modern stage. It is entirely possible that by lighting then darkening the stage through the entrances and exits of the Pages, Marston attempted to create an actual darkness for the “night-walking” Ghost of Andrugio.

A similar piece of staging occurs in Thomas Middleton's *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, which was performed by the King's Men at the Blackfriars in 1611. Giovanus enters with "*a page carrying a torch before him*" (4.4.0); the Page then exits (4.4.36) before an elaborate stage direction calls for wind, clattering of doors, and a "*great light*" in the middle of a tomb. At this point, the ghost of the Lady appears (4.4.42). Unlike his counterparts in *Antonio's Revenge*, the Page actively engages in the action: he sings (4.4.14–28) and responds to his master (4.4.36). Yet the opening to this scene is not an essential part of the narrative; it seems to me to be doing rather than explaining something. That is, the events up until the Page's exit are setting up the important part of the scene: the entrance of the Lady's ghost. The song, in this instance, may have been a way of keeping light on stage for a considerable time in order for the exit of the Page with the torch to have a more significant darkening effect. It is plausible that both Middleton and Marston were striving for similar effects: they illuminate the stage then darken it for the entrance of the ghost soon after.

A ghost enters at the very beginning of the third act of John Mason's *The Turk*—performed by the Children of the King's Revels at the Whitefriars playhouse in 1607. In the final scene of the previous act, a stage direction calls for the entrance of Pages and "*Tapers borne by 2*"—the Pages most likely carried these tapers. All the characters then exit at the end of the scene. At this point, there presumably would have been an inter-act break, where the children would have performed a short entertainment and the tireman would have attended to the candles. Unlike *Antonio's Revenge* and *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, the exit of the torches and the entrance of the ghost in Mason's play were bisected by an inter-act break.

Several indoor plays contain scenes in which ghosts enter at night, but none have such a deliberate use of light and dark as *Antonio's Revenge*. Both Middleton's and Mason's play imply some sort of experimentation with light, but these seem to be one-off occasions rather than regular occurrences. However, through the rotation of entrances and exits with lights, Marston's revenge tragedy creates a recurring system of lighting for the scenes involving the ghost. This

system may be evidence for experimentation with lighting effects. Perhaps with intimate knowledge of the playhouse during its renovation, plus having performed two plays with the Children of Paul's before *Antonio's Revenge*, Marston set out to test the limits of the performance space at Paul's.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, scholars disagree on the extent to which playing companies experimented with light on the early modern indoor stage. Despite this debate, Gair suggests in his edition of *Antonio's Revenge* that "[s]o obvious is this use of light and shade that Marston may have been experimenting with lighting effects, at least to the extent of requiring the 'tireman' to light and extinguish candles to set the mood for different acts" (1999, 35). In *The Chamber of Demonstrations* (Online and DVD), Martin White suggests that playing companies used the inter-act breaks to set the playhouse lighting for the following act. He notes that "scenes in which light plays a particular role in setting mood or a key factor in the narrative are frequently grouped together in a specific sequence" (Online). This convention is certainly true in the case of *Antonio's Revenge*. The first act starts in darkness and ends up at dawn, but the next four acts alternate between day (two and four) and night (three and five). (Act two, however, requires torchlight as it is set indoors at court). If White is correct and indoor playing companies used inter-act breaks to set lighting for the following scene, then perhaps the tireman extinguished some of the candles in the break between acts two and three of *Antonio's Revenge*, perhaps to the extent that onstage light would have significantly added to the overall illumination of the playhouse. If so, then the Pages became absolutely essential to the staging of the play, and since they enter and exit four times in the third act, then the stage would have regularly alternated between light and dark. It is possible, therefore, that the Pages served to set the scene for the entrances of the Ghost.

*Antonio's Revenge* is particularly rich for scholars of early modern indoor playhouses, yet it has received relatively little critical attention. Perhaps the amateur status of the children's companies has led scholarship to favour the practices employed by the adult companies at the other indoor venues, particularly the Blackfriars. Or perhaps Jonson's parody of Marston in

*Poetaster* (1601), during the War of the Theatres, has had a lasting effect. Gair notes that “[a]s far as the annals of theatrical history are concerned, Jonson’s parody seems to have assassinated *Antonio’s Revenge*” (1999, 40). Understanding the vital theatrical roles of the Pages in the third act, however, may lead us to resurrect *Antonio’s Revenge* and view it as an important play in the evolution of stage lighting in the early modern period. Moreover, it may enable us to explore other non-speaking roles on the early modern indoor stage. For these seemingly superfluous characters may hold the key to understanding how certain scenes were staged. Through the use of the Pages, *Antonio’s Revenge* was the first play that consciously explored the potential of light at the indoor performance spaces in the early modern period. As I shall show in the following case study, Marston’s experimentation at Paul’s in 1600 anticipated a general style of indoor playing that developed in the late Jacobean and early Caroline period.

### [Case Study 3]

## Setting the Scene at the Cockpit in the 1630s

For many years, the theatre depicted in Worcester College drawings was considered to represent the Cockpit (also referred to as the Phoenix) playhouse on Drury Lane. Accordingly, scholarship on the Cockpit took the Worcester College drawings as a template for theatrical productions at the playhouse. The plans depicted in the drawings were initially considered to be the work of Inigo Jones in the mid-Jacobean Period—a hypothesis originally made by Iain Mackintosh (1973) then more robustly by John Orrell (1977; 1985). However, John Harris and Gordon Higgott later challenged the idea that these drawings represented the Cockpit by arguing that “[c]lose inspection of their style, technique, and architectural detail shows that the drawings cannot have been made in 1616 but belong more than two decades later, near the end of the 1630s” (1989, 266). More recently, Higgott’s expertise with Jones’ oeuvre led him to conclude that these plans were in fact drawn by John Webb around 1660 (see Martin White’s interview with Higgott in *The Chamber of Demonstrations*, DVD). Andrew Gurr accepts Higgott’s dating of the drawings, but argues that the plans are a re-imagining of an early modern rather than a Restoration playhouse (2009, 197–201). In fact, Gurr labels the drawings as “John Webb’s copy of the plan drawn by Inigo Jones for a Jacobean playhouse, probably the Cockpit of 1616” (2009, 199). However, Oliver Jones points out that although the idea that these drawings may represent some features of a Jacobean playhouse is “beguiling,” the later date and the attribution to Webb mean “we cannot rely on them as a true depiction of a playhouse of this period” (2014, 71).

The attribution of the drawings to Webb in 1660 has significant consequences for scholarship on the Cockpit. No longer can theatre scholars make assumptions about productions at the playhouse based on the shape, dimensions, décor, lighting, and auditorium of the Worcester College drawings. Mackintosh, for instance, argued that the dimensions of the stage

depicted in the drawings would have perfectly matched the design for William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*, performed at the Cockpit at the beginning of the Restoration period in 1660 (1973, 101). In the absence of the Worcester College drawings, however, we know very little about the exact dimensions and facilities of the Cockpit, let alone how playing companies made use of the playhouse. We know that Christopher Beeston acquired the site on Drury Lane in 1616 and quickly turned it into a playhouse, although its tenure was short-lived, as it burned down in February 1617 (Berry 2000, 626–28). Rebuilt hastily in the same year, it was seemingly square in shape, made of brick, and had a tiled roof (Jones 2014, 70–72). Using information from tenement records, Graham Barlow concludes that the playhouse was a 40 by 40 feet square (1988, 39). Orrell, however, favours a larger playhouse that measured 40 by 55 feet (1988, 186–203). According to Mariko Ichikawa, “[t]he second Blackfriars, the Cockpit in Drury Lane and the Salisbury Court seem to have been similar to each other in size and in substantial matters of design” (2013, 12). Thus, much of my discussion on the Blackfriars in the first case study is also relevant to the Cockpit: it was square, held approximately six hundred people, tickets were more expensive, which meant the playhouse catered for a high social rank, and its stage was smaller than those of the outdoor theatres.

Until the mid-1620s, the Cockpit had several resident playing companies: the Queen's Anne's Men moved from the Red Bull to the Cockpit in 1617, only to move back to the outdoor playhouse by 1621; the Prince Charles' Men briefly performed at the playhouse in 1621, with the Lady Elizabeth's Men taking over until 1625. However, for over a decade from 1625, the Queen Henrietta's Men took up residence in Drury Lane. Glynne Wickham argues that Beeston's theatre “flourished to the point of providing the King's Men with the keenest competition they had experienced since the Burbage-Shakespeare collaboration was at its peak” (1972, 2: 118). The competition between these two theatres, and their resident playing companies, contributed to the establishment of an exclusively indoor playhouse repertory and performance style by the 1630s. For as Gurr notes, “the plays written for the Cockpit and Blackfriars in Caroline times were

vastly different from the products of Shakespeare's Globe and playhouses that preceded it" (1992, 229). This difference had much to do with the comparative social, cultural, and political contexts of the periods. But also, by the time audiences came to the Blackfriars and Cockpit playhouses in the 1630s, indoor playing had become a common form of theatre, which surely influenced the composition of plays in the period. Moreover, regular playgoers had become accustomed to the conventions of indoor playing by the Caroline period, particularly in terms of lighting. In this case study, I look at three plays performed at the Cockpit in the early 1630s that pay significant attention to light, both as a trope and a theatrical convention, in their dramaturgy. I argue more generally that the establishment of the Cockpit alongside the Blackfriars as the leading playhouses in Jacobean and Caroline London led to the resident playing companies at these playhouses exploring the dramaturgical potential and limits of the indoor performance space.

### **Symbolic Lighting in Fletcher's *Wit Without Money***

The 1630s saw the revival and revision of many Elizabethan and early Jacobean plays at both the Cockpit and Blackfriars playhouses. One of these was John Fletcher's *Wit Without Money*, revised and performed by various companies at the Cockpit in the 1630s. Hans Walter Gabler, building on previous conclusions made by both Baldwin Maxwell (1939) and Cyrus Hoy (1959) on late Jacobean and Caroline revivals of Fletcher's plays, estimates that *Wit Without Money* was revised by James Shirley c.1625 (1985, 3–5). According to Gordon McMullan, the play was originally performed by the Children of the Queen's Revels, and since Fletcher's association with this company ended in 1614, then the play cannot be any older than this date (1994, 292). The earliest publication of *Wit Without Money* is in 1639, and, therefore, it is difficult to know how much the revised version differs from Fletcher's original manuscript. Since older plays were regularly revised for performance at the Cockpit, it seems likely that the revisions would have incorporated staging practices apposite to the conditions on offer at the playhouse. Thus, I think it is likely that



the stage directions for the 1639 publication are to correspond to the later production at the Cockpit, rather than the earlier Jacobean production.

In the first four acts of Fletcher's comedy there are no stage directions calling for entrances with lights. Yet in the final act, there are six entrances with torches (5.2.0.sd, 5.2.37.sd, 5.3.0.sd, 5.3.9.sd, 5.5.2.sd, 5.5.18.sd). Let us consider the second scene of the fifth act, first of all. The opening stage direction reads: "*Enter Vallentine, Francisco, Lance, and a boy with a torch*" (5.2.0.sd). Like the Pages in *Antonio's Revenge*, the boy says nothing, yet he remains on stage for eighty-five lines. He is not entirely anonymous, however, as Valentine tells him to "Hold thy Torch up handsomely" (5.2.1). In the next scene the boy enters with a torch again and remains on stage throughout (5.2.0.sd). Unlike Marston's Pages, the boy was not the only character on stage with a lighting instrument. In the second scene, the Merchant, accompanying the Uncle, enters midway through with a torch (5.2.35.sd). In the third scene, Shorthose, accompanying Isabell, also enters with a torch (5.3.10.sd).

The third scene follows a similar lighting configuration to the previous scene. Francisco, Lance, and the boy with a torch enter (5.3.0.sd) via one stage door, and Isabell and Shorthose (carrying a torch) enter via the other stage door. At this point, Lance says, "What lights yond?" (5.3.10), presumably referring to the torch that has entered the opposite side of the stage. Martin White notes that torches had the "greatest impact of all [lighting instruments], introducing a sudden burst of light on stage" (2014, 127). Of course torches were used outdoors in this period, so they may well have also served to signify that the action takes place outdoors in the final act of *Wit Without Money*. But if they provided a "sudden burst of light on stage" then torches may have been extremely effective theatrical devices. For one thing, they may have given playing companies the ability to quickly divert or direct attention to specific areas of the stage. Perhaps when Isabell and Shorthouse enter the scene, Lance's question not only refers to fictional space, but also performance space. The audience may also have been thinking: what light is that?

The torches in scenes two and three reinforce the fact that Valentine and Francisco inhabit different fictional locations when off stage to those of the Uncle and Merchant. In the final scene, these sets of characters meet on stage once again. First of all, the Uncle and Merchant enter the stage without any lighting instruments. Crucially they are unaware of the events of the previous two scenes, in which Francisco and Isabell, and Valentine and Lady Hartworth have coupled up. The Merchant asks, “what good newes yet?” to which the Uncle replies, “Faith nothing” (5.5.1). Shortly after, Francisco, Isabella, Lance, and Shorthose enter with a torch (5.5.4.sd) (it is not clear whether the torch is carried by Shorthose or whether a boy accompanies the characters on stage). At this point, the Uncle learns of the news that Francisco and Isabella will marry. Later, Valentine, Lady Hartworth, and Ralph enter with a torch (5.5.18.sd) and the Uncle learns of Valentine and Lady Hartworth’s engagement. The scene, therefore, starts in darkness and finishes in light.

The entrance of the Uncle and Merchant without any lighting instrument at the opening of the final scene is highly significant because it situates the Uncle and the Merchant in darkness. In terms of fictional space, they inhabit a nocturnal environment without a light source. Figuratively, they are in the dark as they are unaware of weddings plans of both couples. The subsequent entrances with torches are highly symbolic. At the Cockpit, one side of the stage would have been illuminated as the Uncle learns that his youngest nephew is to marry. As he learns that Valentine is also to marry, the other side of the stage would have been illuminated. In this sense, the two sets of characters bring light to the Uncle’s world. The Uncle starts the scene “in the dark” and finishes the scene in light, mapping his trajectory from ignorance to knowledge.

The early modern stage often acted as the meeting place for disparate fictional spaces that lay behind the stage doors, which is particularly evident in the final act of *Wit Without Money*. In the second scene, Valentine and the boy encounter the Uncle and the Merchant. Since each entrance is from a different fictional space (the Uncle and Merchant are returning from the Widdow’s house), then they presumably took place via different stage doors. Thus, Valentine,

Francisco, Lance and the boy entered at one side of the Cockpit stage, before Lance and Francisco exited, presumably via the same door (5.2.34.sd), and the Uncle and Merchant entered via the other stage door (5.2.36.sd). The boy's entrance with a torch not only signifies that the characters' immediate environment is dark, but the place from where they have come is also dark; the same is true for the entrance of the Uncle and the Merchant. The stage, therefore, acts as a meeting place for light, both in terms of fictional and performance space. Valentine and the boy exit the stage later in the scene (3.2.86.sd) meaning that it finishes with a visual inversion of the opening—the Uncle and Merchant with a torch on the opposite side of the stage to Valentine and his counterparts at the start.

Prior to his exit, Valentine says, "I'll goe to my chamber" (3.2.85) which is most likely near the surroundings from where he entered—his previous appearance in the play was at the quarters of Lady Hartwell, and since the Uncle and Merchant are returning from talking to Lady Hartwell, then it would seem unlikely that Valentine exited via the door through which the Uncle and Merchant entered. Thus, it is likely that he exited via the door through which he entered. If so, then Valentine and the boy exited through the same door as Francisco and Lance. The start of scene three reinforces this conclusion as the boy enters with Francisco and Lance, suggesting that the boy and Valentine exited into the same offstage fictional space as Francisco and Lance at the end of the previous scene. Moreover, the Uncle and Merchant most likely exited via the same door through which they entered. Certainly, they exited through an opposite door to Valentine because the next time they enter the stage (5.5.0.sd) they are unaware of the events of the previous scene in which Valentine had agreed to marry Lady Hartwell (5.4.65–74).

Stage doors were not only practical—allowing actors to get from backstage to the stage—but also representative of offstage fictional spaces. Tim Fitzpatrick, for instance, notes that the early modern stage lay in between various fictional spaces:

The plays of the [early modern] period ... seem to inscribe in the dialogue an entrance-exit system based on spatial commonsense, which works by establishing in most scenes a spatial 'triangulation' between the place represented by the stage space and a number of

other unseen fictional places represented by the offstage spaces behind the two stage doors. The place represented by the stage space is 'in between' these other places, and the underlying system of opposition between the offstage places is simply the opposition between 'further inwards' or 'nearby' or 'more private', and 'further outwards' or 'distant' or 'more public'. This is a *relational* spatial system: it is not so much a question of *where* we are, but of where we are *not*, or where we are *between*. (2011, 145)

In terms of the narrative of the final act of *Wit Without Money*, when the Uncle and Merchant exit via a different stage door to Valentine and the other characters, it is conceivable that they do not meet again until the final scene of the play. The stage is thus the meeting point where knowledge is shared between characters who, once offstage, occupy different fictional locations. At the Cockpit, when actors exited via one of the stage doors they presumably entered into a shared backstage area. But since the audience could not see backstage, the door through which a character exited was an important signifier of the whereabouts of a character when he or she was not on stage. In this sense, it is important not simply to see the stage as entirely practical, functional, or where the entirety of the play took place. The stage was both *all* that the audience saw (in terms of actual sense perception), and only a small area of a much larger fictional environment in which the events of play took place.

### **Isolating Light in Ford's *Love's Sacrifice***

White's observation, discussed in the previous case study, about the grouping together of scenes in which light plays an important role is certainly true for the second act of Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*, where scenes three and four require the entrance of lights on stage. This use of light in scene three is particularly interesting as it is used to demarcate fictional space, splitting the stage into two seemingly distinct perceptual environments: on the one side, Bianca and Fernando play a game of chess; on the other, Fiormonda and D'Avolos conspire against them. At the start of the scene, Colona enters with lights (unfortunately, there is no specific reference to the type of light source, but it is most likely a set of candles) and places them on a table alongside a chessboard (45.sd). The light isolates Fernando and Bianca from the rest of the stage, and as they play chess,

D'Avolos and Fiormonda talk about them without their knowledge. By accentuating a particular part of the fictional space (the table and chessboard), the light also blocks out sound. That is, Fernando and Bianca cannot hear the conversation between Fiormonda and D'Avolos, despite the pairs of actors only being only a few yards away from one another. When all the characters exit, with the exception of Bianca and Fernando, the fictional space is limited to the space around the chessboard. However, when D'Avolos re-enters the scene (47.sd), the stage is bisected once more. D'Avolos at no point engages with Fernando and Bianca; to all intents and purposes, he is invisible to them. If candles were extinguished prior to the start of this scene, then the actor playing D'Avolos would have occupied a dark part of the stage in comparison to the actors playing Bianca and Ferdinand. Their failure to notice or acknowledge him, therefore, becomes more conceivable.

I think the specificity of lighting in scenes like these from *Wit Without Money* and *Love's Sacrifice* is worth attention. Of course onstage lights always signified something (usually the location of the scene), but we should give greater consideration to what these lights were *doing*. In the scene from *Love's Sacrifice*, the lights obviously signify an indoor space at nighttime, but they also play an important theatrical role, whether the stage is dark or not. They bisect the stage, creating two distinct fictional environments, which enables the audience to experience two sides of the story, as it were, while at the same time recognising that the two sets of characters are unaware of one another. Without the light, such dramaturgy would have been more difficult. Similarly, in the scenes from *Wit Without Money*, the use of torches signified that the characters are outside, but the light also juxtaposes two sets of characters—the characters in the light were in possession of knowledge that the characters in the dark did not have. These scenes demonstrate that lighting could be used as narrative technique, and by the 1630s, with over two decades of experience at indoor playhouses, dramatists and adult companies must surely have been more aware of the possibilities of lighting at these venues than in the early Jacobean period. What we see in the Caroline period is a proliferation of scenes like the ones discussed from *Wit Without*

*Money and Love's Sacrifice* as lighting becomes a more prominent part of the indoor playing repertory.

### **Preparing for Murder in Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore***

Later in the same year (1631) as *Love's Sacrifice* debuted on the Cockpit stage, Ford's most famous tragedy *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* was performed by the Queen Henrietta's Men. In the later play, the role of light is more a theatrical technique than a symbolic representation. The inadvertent murder of Bergetto (3.7) is dependent on darkness in the fictional space of the play, with Grimaldi mistaking his victim for Soranzo. It is certainly possible, like the dead hand scene from *The Duchess of Malfi*, that the Queen Henrietta's Men extinguished some, if not all, of the candles in the playhouse prior to this scene, meaning that both the characters and audience members were immersed in darkness. Yet it is also possible that the scene took place in sufficient light that the audience witnessed Grimaldi's mistake as it happened. Either way, the lighting of the Cockpit in 1631 played a significant role in the audience's experience of this scene.

The scene immediately prior to Bergetto's murder requires an interesting lighting scenario. The opening stage direction reads: "*Enter the Friar in his study, sitting in a chair, Annabella, kneeling and whispering to him, a table before them and wax-lights: she weeps, and wrings her hands*" (3.6.0.sd). It is not the first time that the "study" appears in the play. In the second scene of act two, Soranzo enters "*in his study, reading a book*" (2.2.0.sd). In his edition of the play, Martin Wiggins argues that in both instances the study would have been set up in the discovery space (2.2.0.n; 3.6.0.n). He notes that "there is no other way literally to '*Enter ... sitting*' and '*kneeling*'" (3.6.0.n). The specific reference to "*wax-lights*" is also intriguing. As I noted in the opening chapter, beeswax candles were extremely expensive as they had to be imported from central Europe, and as a result, they were predominantly used in churches and at court. White suggests, therefore, that the use of wax candles in this scene "clearly indicate it is an altar" (Online). It seems likely that the lights in this scene are primarily signifiers of religiosity, further accentuating the Friar's

dominance over Annabella. Perhaps, also, the candles enabled the audience to see the actors in the discovery space. The use of the discovery space here also means that if some of the stage chandeliers and candles were extinguished earlier in act three, then the closing of the curtain at the end of scene would have returned the playhouse to its dark lighting state prior to this scene.

For the murder of Bergetto in the following scene, Grimaldi enters with a rapier and a dark lantern (3.7.0.sd). In my discussion of Bosola in *The Duchess of Malfi*, I noted that dark lanterns were associated with malevolent characters, particularly in tragedies. However, they may also have had an important theatrical significance in terms of stage lighting. In *The Bloody Banquet*, for example, performed by Beeston's Boys at the Cockpit c.1639, a stage direction reads: "*Opens a darke Lanthorne.*" Tymethes then says, "Shew me a little comfort, in the condensive darknesse" (1639, 4.3.F2r). The reference here to opening the lantern is particularly interesting because if the stage was dark, then the opening of the shutter would have had a dramatic effect both in terms of fictional and performance space. Similarly in the scene from *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, the opening and closing of the dark lantern might have determined how and what the audience saw, depending on the overall lighting environment of the playhouse.

When the actors playing Bergetto and Philotis entered disguised, it may have been difficult for the audience to ascertain exactly which characters they were, if the playhouse was relatively dark. Thus, when Gramaldi attacked, the audience may have been confused about whom he attacked. It is not until later in the scene that the other characters refer to Bergetto by name, and even then, Richardetto is still confused about what has actually happened. He asks, "How is't, Bergetto? Slain? It cannot be; are you sure you're / hurt?" (3.7.17–8). After the officers arrive on stage with lights, Richardetto and the other characters realise there is something seriously wrong with Bergetto. Richardetto says, "Give me a light. What's here? All blood! O, sirs, / Signor Donado's nephew now is slain!" (3.7.22–23). The exactness of Richardetto's words here is noteworthy; it leaves the audience in no doubt who has been killed. First of all, he may have taken the light towards Bergetto. Perhaps, at this point, the audience were aware that it was

Bergetto who had been attacked, but perhaps not, since he was disguised. Secondly, “All blood!” tells the audience that there is a wound. Finally, “Signor Donaldo’s nephew is now slain!” reveals the exact identity of the character. In fact, from the point Richardetto enters the scene, he acts as a pseudo-commentator for the audience, explaining what is happening and who is on stage with him. Richardetto thus becomes the vehicle through which the audience understand what has happened.

Given the development of an indoor repertory in the Caroline period, it seems to me likely that dramatists became more attuned with particular playhouses and their lighting configurations. In the case of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, Ford already had previous experience with the Cockpit—his collaboration with Dekker and Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton*, was performed at by the Prince Charles' Men in 1621, and another collaboration, this time solely with Dekker, called the *The Sun's Darling*, was performed by the Lady Elizabeth's Men in 1624. Moreover, he wrote plays for the King's Men at the Blackfriars in the period: *The Laws of Candy* (1615), *The Lover's Melancholy* (1628) and *The Broken Heart* (1630). Ford was well-accustomed, as were the Queen Henrietta's Men, to the conventions of indoor playing by the time *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* followed *Love's Sacrifice* on the Cockpit stage in 1631. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the murder of Bergetto took advantage of the lighting configurations on offer at the Cockpit.

## Genre

The lighting environments at the early modern indoor playhouses were strongly associated with genre. The décor of playhouses, for instance, was intentionally darkened for tragedies. Black hangings hung across the *frons* for tragedies at both the outdoor and indoor playhouses, which enabled the audience to anticipate the kind of performance they were about to see (see Ichikawa 2014). The most explicit example of this practice comes from an anonymous play entitled *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), most likely performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Globe, in which one character says, “The stage is hung with blacke: and I perceiue / The



Auditors prepare for Tragedie” (Q1, A3r). Similarly, in Marston’s *The Insatiate Countess*, performed by the Children of the Queen’s Revels at the indoor Whitefriars in 1611, one character says, “The stage of heav’n is hung with solemn black, / A time best fitting to act tragedies” (4.4.4–5). Even the prologue to *Antonio’s Revenge* suggests that the stage at Paul’s Playhouse was darkened by black hangings, with a reference to “our black-visaged shows” (20).

The Induction to Marston’s comedy *What You Will*, discussed in the second case study, implies that perhaps the lighting of the indoor playhouses was also darkened for tragedies. In the opening line, Doricus says, “Fie some lights ... let there be no deeds of dark- / nesse done among vs” (A2r). These lines imply that comedies required a relatively bright and consistent form of lighting. Yet they also imply that certain performances, most likely tragedies, may have chosen to dispense with some of the lighting in order to perform “deeds of darknesse.” Moreover, as I discussed in Chapter 2, it might have been possible to shutter the windows in the indoor playhouses, which might have been the convention for tragedies. Certainly tragedies were symbolically associated with darkness, as the black hangings signify. Accordingly, it seems likely that playing companies would have attempted at some point to accompany this symbolism with an appropriately dark lighting environment.

The plays with the most interesting lighting stage directions are more often than not tragedies, as the three case studies in this chapter demonstrate, with the exception of the comedy *Wit Without Money*. There were certainly exceptions to the general staging conventions in the early modern playhouses, but it seems likely that the use of light in the revival of Fletcher’s comedy was more symbolic than theatrical. Light has very little relevance in the rest of the play, and all the stage directions that call for the entrance of light occur in the final act. Of course the stage might have been darkened prior to the start of the final act, but doing so would have been out of keeping with the actual narrative. The final act is not tragic, there are no “deeds of darknesse,” and light is simply a means of accentuating the ignorance of the Uncle and the Merchant. By contrast, the tragedies considered in this chapter generally require an actual change in the lighting

environment of the playhouse for the staging of scenes. Playing companies would have found it much easier to darken or brighten the stage if the playhouse was relatively dark from the outset. Playwrights would have also been aware of this possibility when composing plays for the indoor playhouses, and perhaps it is for this reason that tragedies more than any other genre have the most experimental stage directions for lighting.

### **The Evolution of Light on the Early Modern Stage**

Although we tend to think that indoor playing conventions developed primarily after the King's Men started performing at the Blackfriars in 1609, it was in fact at the turn of the century when the possibilities of lighting at the indoor playing space were first explored. Marston's work with the Children of Paul's cannot be undervalued in this respect, despite the smallness of the playhouse and the amateur status of its resident playing company. *Antonio's Revenge* is seemingly a piece of experimental theatre, as its complex and recurring system of onstage light suggests. The dramaturgy of Marston's revenge tragedy was replicated later in the Jacobean period, most notably with Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. The system of lighting used in the "dead hand" scene, which has been the focus of much scholarly debate, is no more sophisticated than the staging employed in *Antonio's Revenge*, fourteen years earlier. By the 1630s, Ford's tragedies and Massinger's revival of Fletcher's comedy may not have experimented with light in the way that Marston may have at Paul's for *Antonio's Revenge* in 1600, but rather they employed lighting conventions that had become general practices at the indoor playhouses. Extinguishing candles and the entrances and exits of handheld lights were perhaps as commonplace on the indoor Caroline stage as the use of handheld lights as signifiers were on the Elizabethan and early Jacobean outdoor stage. Whereas Marston may have been experimental in 1600, perhaps by the 1630s, Ford and Massinger were simply conventional.

## *Part 2*

Being-in-Light at the Sam Wanamaker  
Playhouse

# Introduction

## The Sam Wanamaker Playhouse

When the reconstructed Globe opened on London's South Bank in 1997 only part of Sam Wanamaker's vision for Shakespeare's Globe was realised. Within fifty metres of the amphitheatre lay a building constructed of "[s]pecially fired handmade bricks ... carefully bonded with carved Portland stone trim" (Greenfield and McCurdy 2014, 35). For the best part of fifteen years the interior of this building was used for rehearsing and educational purposes, before it became a building site that eventually culminated in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (SWP). When the SWP opened in January 2014, it completed the original vision of its namesake to have outdoor and indoor re-imaginings of Shakespeare's theatres.

### Design

The SWP is significantly smaller than its al fresco neighbour. The Globe is 99 feet in diameter (6400 square feet), with its stage (without extensions) measuring 44 x 25 feet (Orrell 1997, 59). The SWP is 40 x 55 feet (2200 square feet) and its stage measures approximately 21 x 15 feet. The area of the Globe is thus almost thrice the size of the indoor playhouse. These dimensions are obviously reflected in the capacities of both theatres. The Globe holds over 1500 audience members (700 hundred standing in the yard), compared to approximately 340 at the SWP.

The SWP is a beautifully crafted space made of (primarily) English oak. It has a jet black *frons* elaborately decorated with gold and red paint and an intricately detailed ceiling—modeled on a ceiling at the seventeenth-century Cullen House. The auditorium has a pit, lower and upper galleries, and a stage with a balcony. Apart from a handful of standing positions in the upper



**Figure 2.1:** Seating viewed from the stage balcony in Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (photo by author)



**Figure 2.2:** Stage Sconce in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (photo by author)

gallery, the SWP is seated (figure 2.1), based on the auditorium layout of John Webb's plans for a playhouse found in the Worcester College drawings (c. 1660). Jon Greenfield and Peter McCurdy—the architect and head craftsman of the playhouse, respectively—note that the “arrangement of the space is given by the Worcester College drawings, the look and feel of the space by accounts of the Blackfriars, and all other details by knowledge gained from surviving contemporary examples” (2014, 37). The playhouse that eventually emerged in January 2014 was restricted to the dimensions of the original shell constructed in 1995. Interestingly, Greenfield and McCurdy compare this dilemma to the one James Burbage faced in 1596 when he came to reconvert the hall at the Blackfriars monastery into a playhouse (2014, 38). In an article for *The Guardian* prior to the opening of the SWP, Artistic Director at the Globe, Dominic Dromgoole, wrote that “what we have tried to do is to create an indoor playhouse that Shakespeare would have recognised” (11 January 2014). Given the dearth of exact evidence, and the restrictions placed by the building itself, what remains is an archetype: a theatre that incorporates evidence—documentary, illustrative, and archaeological—about Jacobean indoor playhouses more generally (Greenfield and McCurdy 2014, 37).

### **Lighting**

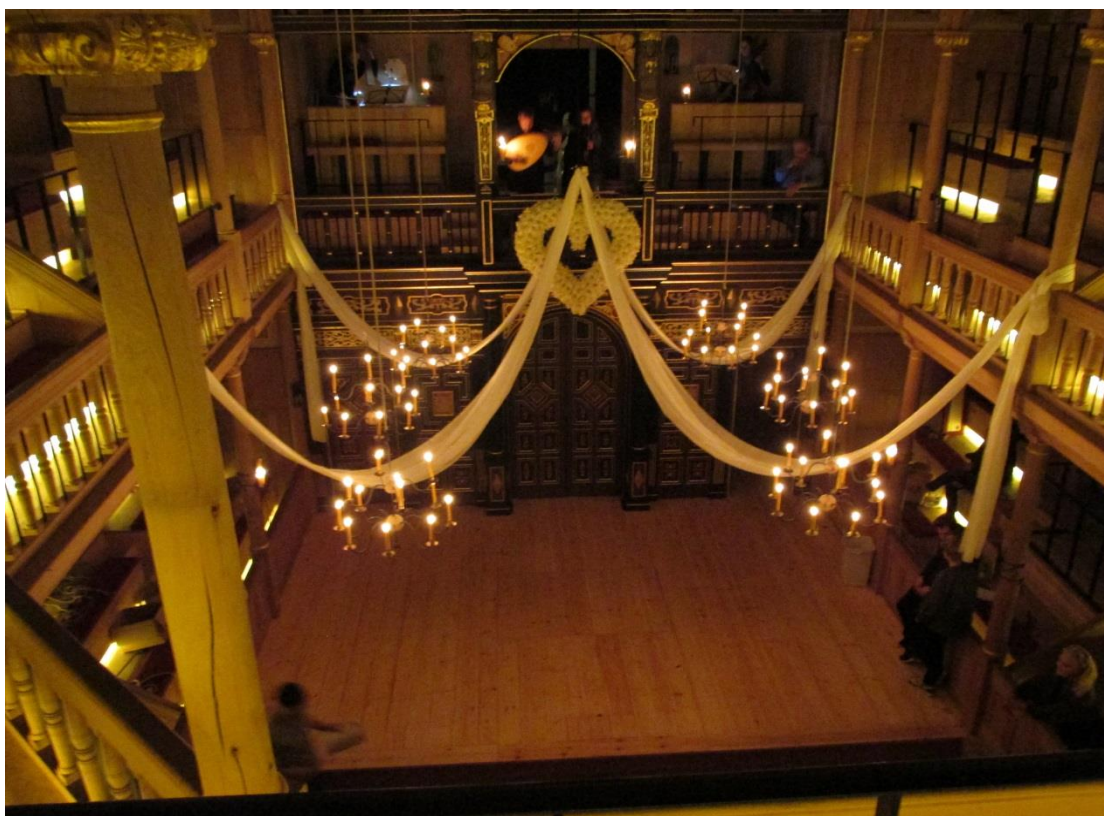
Candlelight is the predominant form of illumination in the SWP, with six chandeliers hanging above the stage, each with twelve beeswax candles (figures 3.1 and 3.2). The standard height for these chandeliers is 2.2 metres (White 2014, 124), but they are also on a pulley system enabling them to be moved up and down with relative ease from backstage. Several other lighting materials supplement the stage chandeliers, such as stage sconces tied to the pillars of the lower gallery (figure 2.2) as well as a host of handheld lighting utensils used by the actors themselves.

A major obstacle for any theatre reconstruction is reconciling historical evidence with the demands of modern theatre. The sparse evidence for lighting in the early modern commercial





**Figure 3.1:** Chandelier in Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (photo by author)



**Figure 3.2:** Six lit chandeliers during rehearsal for *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (October 2014) (photo by author)

playhouses, as discussed in Chapter 2, further complicates this reconciliation at the SWP. This fact obviously creates significant problems for the verisimilitude of the lighting materials in the SWP. The first and most important consideration for lighting during the construction of the SWP was the stage chandeliers as these provide the majority of illumination in the playhouse. In his interpretation of the Salisbury Court documents, R. B. Graves argues that at most 30 tallow candles burned in the Jacobean playhouses at any given time (1999, 184). White's interpretation, on the other hand, concludes that there were approximately 55 candles illuminated during performances. At the SWP, there are generally around 84 candles illuminating the playhouse—six chandeliers with 12 candles, and six stage sconces with two candles. Depending on the production, this number can increase or decrease slightly, but either way, it is significantly more than both Graves' and White's estimations from the Salisbury Court documents. Accounting for this discrepancy, White argues:

A modern reconstruction of an indoor theatre, however, may reasonably decide that in order to respond to the unquestionably different expectations of Jacobean and modern audiences a higher level of illumination is required, one that can still capture the nature and 'feel' of the original practice without making what was a convention in Jacobean performance into a theme in ours. [...] So in all but the most 'authentic' reconstruction practices or a research exercise, a sensible balance must be made in order to avoid having the stage operate in one time period and the audience in another; the essential present tense of a theatrical performance must be preserved with the audience as participants, listening and watching, not as merely curious observers of an experiment. (2014, 121)

In Chapter 4, I propose that the reason for the extra candles was in part influenced by anxieties as to whether audiences would be able to see in the SWP. White seems to imply as much in his reasoning. What we have, then, in the SWP is a lighting environment informed by historical evidence but adjusted to modern expectations of theatre.

It seems likely, as noted in Chapter 2, that early modern commercial playhouses used tallow candles, with the more expensive beeswax limited to court and churches. Supposedly, tallow candles smoked profusely, produced unpleasant smells, and required regular maintenance. White argues, however, that experiments performed at his reconstructed theatre at the University of Bristol and at the Castle Theatre in Český Krumlov (figure 4.1) show that tallow candles “did



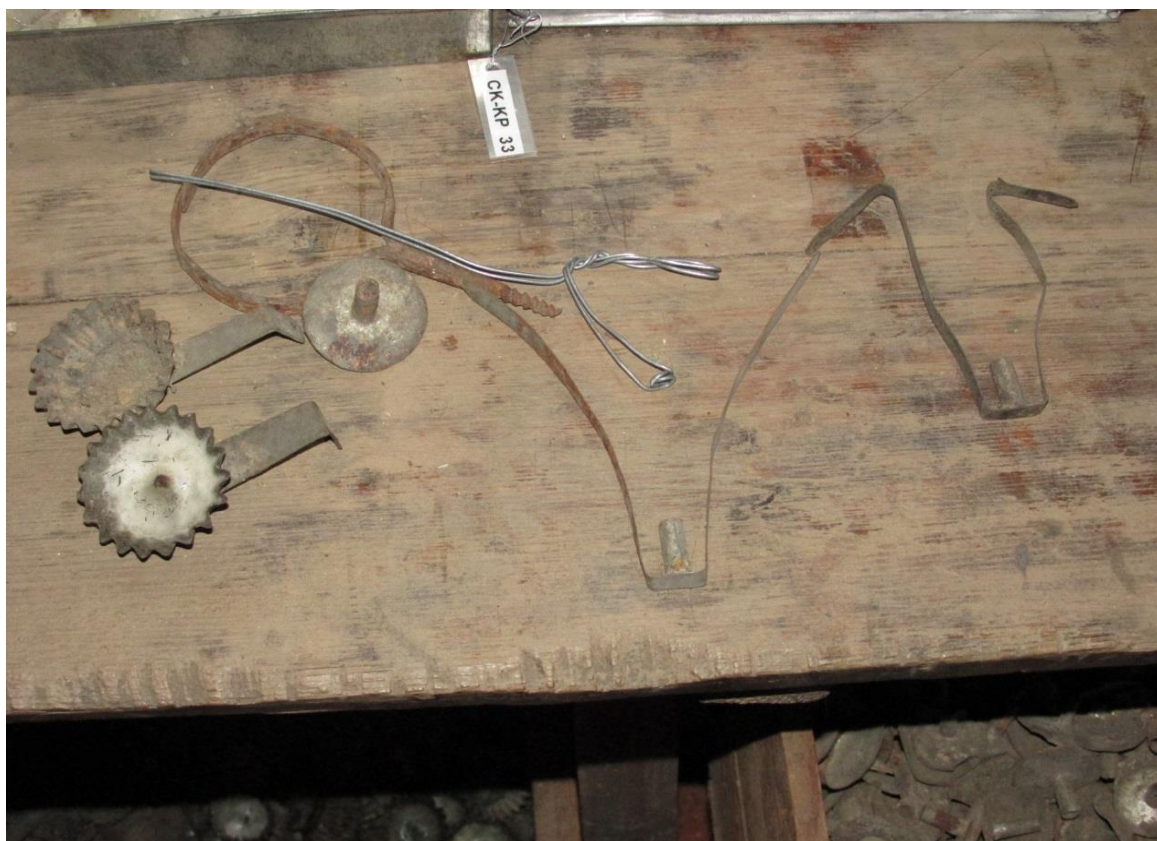


**Figure 4.1:** Castle Theatre at Český Krumlov (photo courtesy of Dr. Pavel Salvko)



**Figure 4.2:** Tallow residue (beef fat and sand) from candle in Castle theatre depository (photo by author).





**Figure 4.3:** Assorted lighting utensils in Castle Theatre depository (photo by author)



**Figure 4.4:** Lantern in Castle Theatre despository (photo courtesy of Dr. Pavel Slavko)

not produce significantly more smoke or an unpleasant smell.” He concludes, therefore, that “both smoke and smell came from the tobacco pipes, especially of the young gallants seated on the stage” (2014, 126). The SWP uses beeswax candles, and as beeswax burns more slowly than tallow, a full set can burn for almost 90 minutes without maintenance. During a lighting workshop in the playhouse, Paul Russell (Production Manager at Shakespeare’s Globe) told us that between 120 and 140 candles are required per performance, with many of the candles replaced during the interval.

Many of the lighting instruments used in the playhouse are modeled on findings from the Castle Theatre in Český Krumlov, in the south of the Czech Republic. The theatre, located in a medieval castle overlooking the town, was built in the late-seventeenth century but renovated in the mid-eighteenth century. The theatre houses a large depository of some of the earlier theatre materials including original lighting mechanisms (see figures 4.2–4.4).<sup>8</sup> Several of the handheld lighting devices used in the SWP are modeled upon these devices (e.g. figure 4.4).

Single candles and lanterns are regularly used for SWP productions, and these function much in the same way as their early modern equivalents did. Torches, however, have been modernised to paraffin torches instead of wooden branches wrapped with hemp rope dipped in tallow (a Health and Safety Officer’s nightmare). A common utensil employed on the SWP stage is the mobile candle branch, which is a candlestick that branches out in four directions, each with a candle at the end. There was no sign of such a device at Český Krumlov, and there appears to be little, if any, evidence to support its existence in the early modern period. In Chapter 4, I discuss how this instrument circumvents the lack of footlights in the SWP.

There are no windows on the outer shell of the SWP building, but window shutters line the lower and upper galleries. When these are open, electric lighting (LEDs designed to simulate daylight) floods in from the corridor area behind the seating, making the playhouse significantly

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<sup>8</sup> I would like to extend my great thanks to Dr. Pavel Slavko (Director of the Castle Theatre, Český Krumlov) for his hospitality and willingness to share his knowledge of the theatre.

brighter. Whether the shutters are opened or closed not only dictates the amount of light that enters the playing area, but it also determines the kind of light, which is equally important. When the shutters are closed, the playhouse maintains a stable orange-tinged light created solely by the candles (figure 3.2). I initially found seeing *in* this kind of light quite peculiar and imprecise. Some costume colours, for instance, seemed to merge—such as black and purple, or dark blue and dark green. In his book *Action in Perception* (2004), Alva Noë writes that “[t]he colour of an object is just the way its apparent color changes as viewing conditions change” (141). For example, he notes that a red object

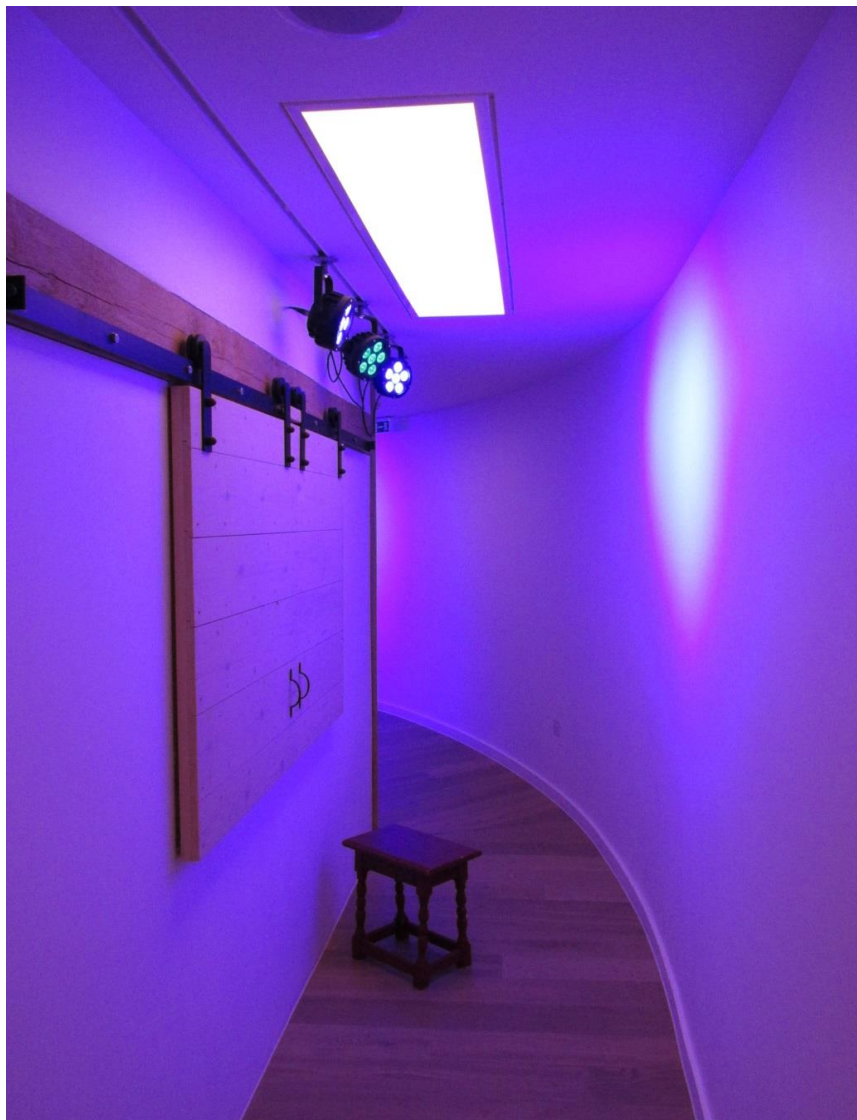
grows darker in a characteristic way in shadow, and it becomes brownish in green light; it stands out among blue things, in the characteristic way in which red things will stand out among blue things, but get[s] lost ... among red things, and so forth. (143).

Noë concludes that “colors are ways objects act on and are affected by the environment” (144). Bruce R. Smith makes a similar point in his study of the colour green in early modern culture, in which he writes that “[c]olour is not an object out there in space, waiting to be named; it is a phenomenon, an event that happens between object and subject” (2009, 15). Colour is a strange phenomenon in the SWP. As modern beings, our ideas of certain colours have developed through a history of seeing things in daylight or electric light. Consequently, seeing things in the orange-tinged candlelight of the SWP challenges our normative experiences of colour.

When the shutters are open, the mingling of the electric corridor lighting with candlelight creates a strange blend of hard white and soft orange light. This confluence creates a yellow kind of lighting environment around the stage area. While the electric light floods the stage, changing the colour of the candlelight, the latter has little effect on the former. What remains, I find, is a yellowish lighting environment partially surrounded by a white border of electric light. The reason for this occurrence is not only due to the relative strength of the lighting sources—as the electric light overwhelms the candlelight—but also the way in which these sources cast their light. Martin White notes that chandeliers “appear to cast their light ‘behind’ them, which suggests that they were hung further ‘down stage’ than we might at first imagine” (2014, 124). “Behind,”

however, depends on where an observer is seated. The chandeliers cast their light towards the *frons* when seated directly opposite the stage. Light moves towards the sides of the stage and the audience members seated in these areas when one sits at the side of the lower gallery. The audience in the pit become reasonably well-lit for those seated in the musicians' gallery directly above the stage.

There are two types of electric light in the SWP corridor (figure 5). The long and wide fluorescent ceiling lights spread light evenly across the corridor, and the spotlights enhance or



**Figure 5:** Corridor lighting (lower gallery) during *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* Rehearsal (photo by author).

colour the ceiling light. These spotlights point away from the playhouse and towards the outer walls of the building. Corridor lighting is controlled from backstage and unlike the chandeliers, its luminosity can be easily adjusted. On some occasions, when the window shutters are open, the corridor is quite dark and as such, the electric light has minimal impact on the overall illumination of the playhouse. In Chapter 4, I discuss in more detail how these shutters are used during performances, and what effect they can have on the dramaturgy of SWP productions.

The electric corridor lighting is an attempt to simulate natural window light that entered the Blackfriars playhouse in the early modern period. However, the lack of filtration, namely by window glass, and the difficulty of recreating sunlight artificially, mean that confluence of electric and candlelight in the playhouse is far removed from the relationship of candlelight and daylight. Plans to put glass panes—modelled on early modern window glass (see Chapter 2)—into the playhouse will help dilute the electric light to a certain extent. I suspect that this historically-informed window glass will enable candlelight to more strongly retain its orange colour when the shutters are open. Moreover, the window glass should effectively filter the electric light, so that it more closely resembles daylight.

Adjusting the height of the chandeliers, or extinguishing and relighting the candles that they hold, is a common practice in the SWP. In Chapter 4, I consider how the practice of raising and lowering the chandeliers is experienced from different parts of the playhouse, drawing on my experiences of various SWP productions. Then, I examine the logistics of extinguishing and relighting the chandeliers and explore the different solutions particular directors found to solve this problem.

We must keep in mind the lighting environments people inhabited on a daily basis in early modern England, such as I discussed in the first part of the thesis, in any discussion of lighting in the SWP. Quite simply, recreating the material conditions of early modern theatrical lighting does not recreate how people saw in this light. Rather, we must think about how we see in the light of the SWP and compare this to how early modern audience members might have

seen in the light of the Jacobean playhouses. These experiences are only partly material; they also depend on how people see/saw in light on a daily basis, how they make/made their way into these playhouses, and how they inhabit/inhabited these environments once they arrived. In short, these are lived experiences performed by beings that are immersed in the world. Thus, we should, first and foremost, explore how we inhabit the SWP: it is only through understanding how we see, hear, feel, and breath in this environment that we can begin to approach how early modern people came to inhabit their playhouses.

### **SWP Repertoire**

As Artistic Director at the Globe since 2005, Dromgoole has cemented the relationship between Shakespeare and the reconstructed theatre, with each season generally consisting of four Shakespeare productions and four contemporary plays, and in more recent years, occasional short runs of foreign language Shakespeare productions. It is important to note here that, although Dromgoole has final say on the plays to be performed each season, he generally directs only one or two production per season, with freelance directors brought in to direct the other productions. In the summer of 2012, the theatre ran the “Globe to Globe Festival” in which thirty-seven Shakespeare productions were performed in thirty-seven different languages. Although “Globe to Globe” opened up the Globe to a new audience that is more in keeping with contemporary London, it further reinforced the sole association of Shakespeare with the theatre, in a way that would not have been the case at the original Globe in the early modern period. In fact, as Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper (Head of Higher Education and Research at Shakespeare’s Globe) notes, the Shakespeare-centricity of the Globe “is most vividly felt in the Globe gift shop,” where almost all the memorabilia carries the brand of the famous bard (2012, 56). Dromgoole’s input as Artistic Director in the last decade, therefore, has closely aligned the Globe repertoire with the commercial drive of Shakespeare’s Globe.

The opening of the SWP, by way of contrast with the Globe, has presented Dromgoole (who was part of the Architecture Research Group that designed and oversaw the building of the playhouse) with the opportunity to push the early modern repertoire at Shakespeare's Globe in a slightly different direction. The playhouse opened with John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* in January 2014 (directed by Dromgoole) and in its first two seasons the repertoire has focused on the work of Shakespeare's contemporaries, marking a diversion from the Shakespeare-focused repertoire of the outdoor Globe. In the shortened first season (January–March 2014), *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* followed *The Duchess of Malfi* onto the SWP stage, before the Globe Young Players (a group of actors aged 12–16) tackled Marston's *The Malcontent*. The first full SWP season took place between October 2014 and April 2015, and opened with John Ford's incestual and bloody *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* returned for a Christmas run, owing to its success in the opening season, and Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *The Changeling* opened in January 2015. The season returned to Ford's *The Broken Heart*, before the Globe Young Players finished with Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*.

In the upcoming 2015–16 season, however, the repertoire focuses on Shakespeare's late plays that were performed originally at the Blackfriars from 1609—*Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. The initial shift away from Shakespeare towards his contemporaries was largely successful, with the significantly fewer number of seats in the SWP almost guaranteeing a sell out for each production. A possible problem for the SWP in the future may be its association with the perceived value for money when purchasing tickets for the Globe. Whereas at the Globe, the cheapest ticket (£5) gives an audience member a standing position in the yard—the best view in the theatre—the cheapest ticket at the SWP requires an audience member to stand at the side of the upper gallery, with an extremely limited view of the stage. This scenario is not uncommon for a regular theatregoer in London, but given its close proximity to and association with the Globe, audiences may expect to pay less and still have a good viewing position in the SWP. Thus far, however, audiences have responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to explore



less well-known early modern plays. Accordingly, Shakespeare's Globe, with the first two seasons of the SWP, developed a more diverse early modern repertoire, making the decision to return to a Shakespeare-centric for the third SWP season rather surprising.

The appointment of Emma Rice as the new Artistic Director from April 2016 is sure to take Shakespeare's Globe in a slightly different direction. Unlike Dromgoole, who only had the one theatre in operation when he took the position in 2006, Rice has two very different theatres at her disposal, which gives her the opportunity to develop two distinct repertoires. The outdoor theatre has a long association with Shakespeare, and given its much larger capacity, it is likely that continuing with Shakespeare-centric repertoire will be more commercially viable than a shift towards Shakespeare's contemporaries. The success of opening two seasons of non-Shakespearean drama at the SWP, however, should encourage Rice to explore the vast and multifarious work of Shakespeare's contemporaries, while maintaining a consistently well-attended theatre.

### **Research Focus**

Research has long been a focus of Shakespeare's Globe, even before the construction started on the outdoor theatre in the 1990s, and years of research went into the construction of the SWP, directed primarily by Karim-Cooper. The open roof at the Globe denies researchers the ability to use the theatre for public research events during the winter months, when the theatre is vacant, but the SWP, in its first two years, has become a centre for performance-based research. Dr. Will Tosh was appointed as Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Shakespeare's Globe in 2014 and heads an initial two-year project that focuses on performing practices in the SWP. This project involves the use of the SWP as an interactive theatrical laboratory, in which Tosh, along with other academics and actors, host public workshops on particular early modern staging practices, such as lighting, gesture, the use of the discovery space, music, and dramaturgy. These workshops take place primarily in the summer, during the Globe season, when the SWP is used infrequently for

concerts and short dramatic runs. As Shakespeare's Globe expands its research focus, with plans for a new library, archives, and research centre on the site, the SWP will form an increasingly important role in at Shakespeare's Globe, with the playhouse acting as a dual research and performance centre. Although the research undertaken at the SWP is potentially very beneficial for performance-based studies, both in an early modern and contemporary context, it is important for researchers not to view the playhouse as a lens into the past. Rather, the SWP offers us the opportunity to open up a dialogue with the past.

## 4

## Lighting Practices at the SWP

It is about 10 am on a sunny July day in London and my first day at Shakespeare's Globe, where I am to spend the next seven months on a research residency. I am not quite sure what to expect. In fact, I am not entirely sure how to get there. Fast forward ten hours, and I am standing on the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (SWP) stage holding a lantern in a scene from John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. I spent most of my first day inside the SWP in rehearsals for a lighting workshop to be performed that evening, led by Dr. Will Tosh (Postdoctoral Fellow, Shakespeare's Globe) and Professor Martin White (University of Bristol).<sup>9</sup> This public workshop was part of the performance practices project, as discussed in the introduction to this part of the thesis, and explored possible experimentations with light in early modern plays using the lighting technologies of the SWP. From 2 p.m., Martin, Will, and four actors spent four hours rehearsing three scenes to be performed that evening—a scene each from Ben Jonson's *Catiline*, Thomas Middleton's *The Second Tragedy*, and Ford's famous tragedy. Each scene had the potential to be performed in several ways: sometimes in light, sometimes in darkness.

The scene from *Catiline*, for instance, generated a number of possible lighting effects. In the opening scene of the play, a stage direction states that “*a darkness comes over the place*” (1.1. 311.sd). In the early modern indoor playhouses, it is hard to know what kind of conventions this stage direction might have elicited. Certainly, there are few stage directions like this one from Jonson's tragedy. Perhaps candles were extinguished or chandeliers raised to create the effect. Perhaps the stage direction was merely a cue for the actors to display change in atmosphere

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<sup>9</sup> Professor Martin White (University of Bristol) was the lead academic on lighting for the SWP.

within the narrative of the play. In the SWP, it is possible to make a “darkness come over the place,” to a certain extent, by raising chandeliers and extinguishing candles.

Spending the afternoon in the SWP, I discovered that rehearsing is not so much a method of implementing preconceived staging ideas upon the playhouse. Rather, it is a process of continual negotiation between the aims of the director and actors, and the possibilities of the performance conditions. Quite often, it seems, techniques created and mastered in rehearsal rooms are at odds with the possibilities of movement and staging inside the SWP. Thus, there is a crucial difference between rehearsal and tech rehearsal because it is only once directors and actors rehearse in the playhouse that they can understand the harmony between what they aimed to do and what is possible in the SWP. What occurred in the rehearsal for the lighting workshop was an osmotic process, where instead of fitting playtexts into established practices, Martin, Will, and the four actors were making theatre. As a result, lighting practices in the SWP are far from rigid but are, in fact, continually evolving within the material possibilities of light in the playhouse, as different combinations of directors, actors, and audiences come together to make theatre.

### **Opening the Show**

The opening lighting configurations for productions at the SWP illustrate the versatility of lighting in the playhouse. Although the interior of the playhouse is always darker than its immediate surrounds, measures can be taken to both lessen and augment the gap between light outside and inside the playhouse. For example, at the start of both *Julius Caesar* (2014) and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (2014–15), the window shutters were open, enabling the electric corridor lighting to enter the auditorium. While in *Julius Caesar* the chandeliers were already lit and at their standard height as the audience entered the playhouse, in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, two actors lit the chandeliers as the audience took their seats. Both these plays opened with the playhouse near its optimal lighting capacity. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (2014) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (2014), by

contrast, opened with the lit chandeliers in their standard position but window shutters closed. These plays thus opened in a space illuminated solely by candlelight (once seat lighting had been turned off).

The lighting configuration of the SWP as the audience members enter and take their seats is highly significant, as this initial experience of light determines the effect of the subsequent lighting effects in the playhouse. If a show opens with the SWP near its optimal lighting capacity then the first lighting change will most likely be felt as a darkening effect. The lighting configuration for the opening of *Julius Caesar*, for example, prepared the playhouse for the staging of the storm in the third scene of the opening act. At this point, the shutters were closed and chandeliers raised to the ceiling, meaning that the playhouse became darker in an attempt to mirror the “threat’ning clouds” (8) and “disturbed sky” (39) of stormy Rome. If an SWP production begins with the window shutters closed, but chandeliers lit and at their standard height, then the first major lighting change could either be a darkening effect, by raising the chandeliers to the ceiling, or a brightening effect, by opening the window shutters or using handheld lighting instruments on stage.

Every production at the SWP thus far has started with one of the lighting configurations discussed in the previous paragraph, with the exception of *The Changeling* (2015). The window shutters were closed and chandeliers remained unlit as the audience entered the playhouse for *The Changeling*, which meant that seat lighting—consisting of electric light along the bottom of the rows of seats—was the only form of illumination in the auditorium. When the play started, seat lighting was turned off and the playhouse was in complete darkness. Actors then entered with several small lanterns illuminating their faces. The chandeliers were then lit and window shutters opened for the first scene, creating a significantly brighter space than at the start of the play.

The initial lighting environment also sets the tone for the events of the play. The exclusively candlelit space for the opening of *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, for instance, seemed to throw us straight into the illicit world of Ford’s tragedy. Here, the comparative darkness and peculiarity

of the orange-tinged light fostered a foreign and somewhat shady atmosphere. In comparison, the opening of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, with the comical lighting of the chandeliers by the actors playing Tim and George, created a convivial atmosphere that continued throughout the show. If the brightness of the opening to *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* set the tone for the following three-hour festive romp, then the opening darkness of *The Changeling* created an apposite atmosphere for the dark and deceptive overtones of Middleton and Rowley's tragedy. It would have been difficult for *The Changeling* to suddenly burst into the kind of physical comedy that suffused *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* given the effect of opening in darkness. In this sense, therefore, the opening lighting configuration of the SWP is an active component in shaping the action to come, much more so than at the naturally-lit Globe.

### **Using the Corridor**

Whether the window shutters are open or closed determines the ways in which the corridor areas in the SWP are used during performances. There are three corridors in the playhouse, one on each level. These corridors surround three sides of the SWP, and they all connect to the various backstage areas on each level. The corridors are extremely useful for both the stage management team and the actor as these passageways enable them to move easily between the backstage areas and surrounds of the playhouse. The corridors in the lower and upper galleries have window shutters, as I mentioned in the introduction to part 2, which enable electric light to enter the playhouse when open (see figure 2.1). When the shutters are open, the actors or stage crew cannot use the corridors to get from one side of the playhouse to the other as the audience members can see them. In these instances, actors and stagehands use the surrounds of the SWP building, namely the foyer area at Shakespeare's Globe.

Occasionally, some of the action of SWP productions takes place in the corridor areas. During *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, for example, the window shutters opened to reveal a dark corridor area, which enabled the officers searching for Bergetto's murderer to pass through with torches,

with their movements casting a shadow across the playhouse. In *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the duel between Jasper and Rafe took place primarily in the lower gallery corridor. Only audience members in the pit and lower gallery could see what was happening, with audience members in the upper gallery excluded. I saw the production twice—first, positioned in the upper gallery, and the second time, from the lower gallery. On the first occasion, I had to rely on the reactions of both the actors on stage and the audience in the pit and lower gallery in order to make some sort of sense of what was happening. At one point, as the actors' and audience's eyes mapped the progression of Jasper and Rafe through the corridor, there was a loud gasp from the characters on stage. From the upper gallery, I could only guess what this gasp was in response to. When I later saw the play from the lower gallery, I found out that it occurred when Jasper crashed Rafe's face against a perspex window. The use of the corridors in the SWP, therefore, can create significantly different experiences of the same scene depending on one's position within the playhouse. At the Globe, in comparison, the contrasting experiences between the audience members in the yard and galleries are usually a result of the intimate interaction between actors and groundlings, at the expense of the seated audience members. The SWP, however, can create contrasting experiences between the different areas of the playhouse by excluding large sections of the audience from actually seeing the action.

### **Raising the Chandeliers**

The use of the corridors is not the only way SWP productions distribute contrasting experiences across the various areas of the playhouse. The effect of raising and lowering the stage chandeliers, for example, very much depends upon where one is situated within the SWP. In order to explore this phenomenon, I invite you to meet me in the playhouse. I recognise that for some readers, the interior of the playhouse only exists in the imagination or from images seen via various media; that is okay, as long as you agree to immerse yourself within that imaginary environment. I also ask you to imagine that the chandeliers are lit, windows shuttered, and electric light turned

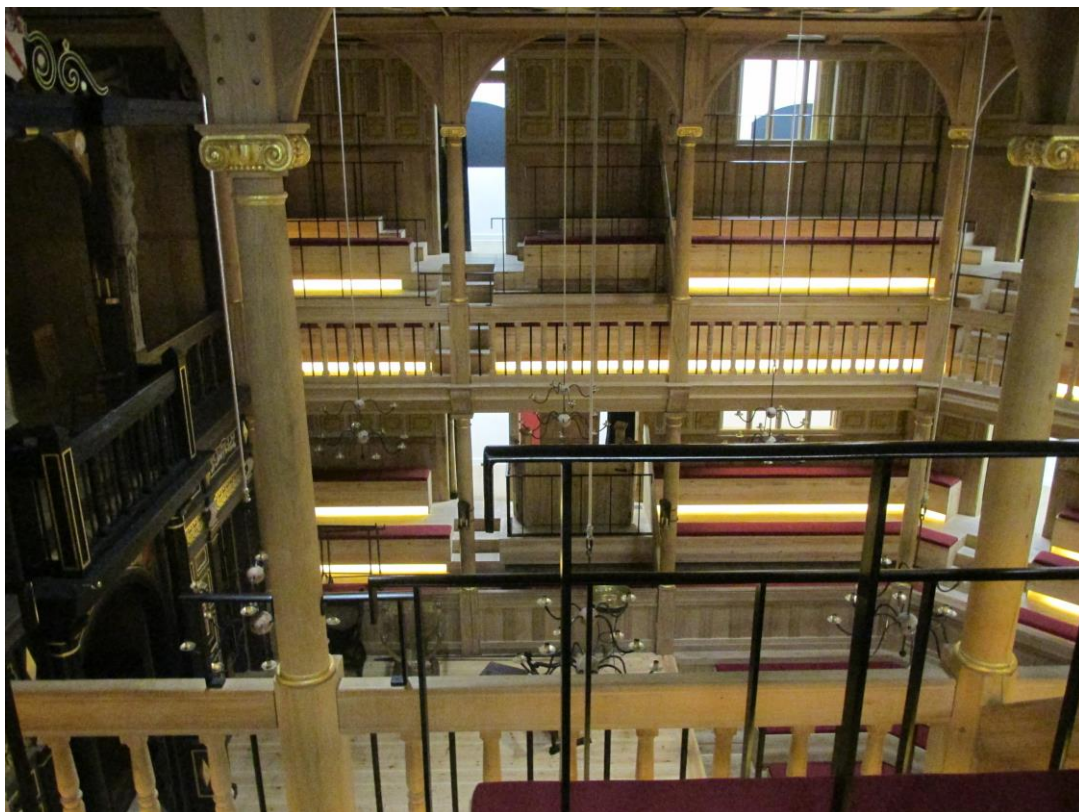
off (see figure 3.2). We will move around the space together, change our seats at various points, and jump between performances. At all times we will see in the light of the SWP, and as we go, we will record the phenomenal effects of the changes in light brought about by the practices employed in the playhouse.

We will start in the standing positions in the upper gallery for the production of *Thomas Tallis* (2014). These are the least expensive seats in the playhouse, but unlike the Globe, where the cheapest tickets position you right in the middle of the action of the yard, the view is very restricted in the SWP (figure 6.1). The play is a specially commissioned piece for the SWP about the English composer Thomas Tallis and his relationship with the various Tudor monarchies of the sixteenth century. The play regularly experiments with light by raising and lowering the chandeliers as well extinguishing the candles altogether. At one point, just after the interval, the chandeliers are raised to the ceiling. When the chandeliers are at their standard height, we spend most of our time looking through the candles from this position. However, when the chandeliers are raised to the ceiling, they are at eye level. Although we can see the chandeliers rise, at no point do they rise far above us.

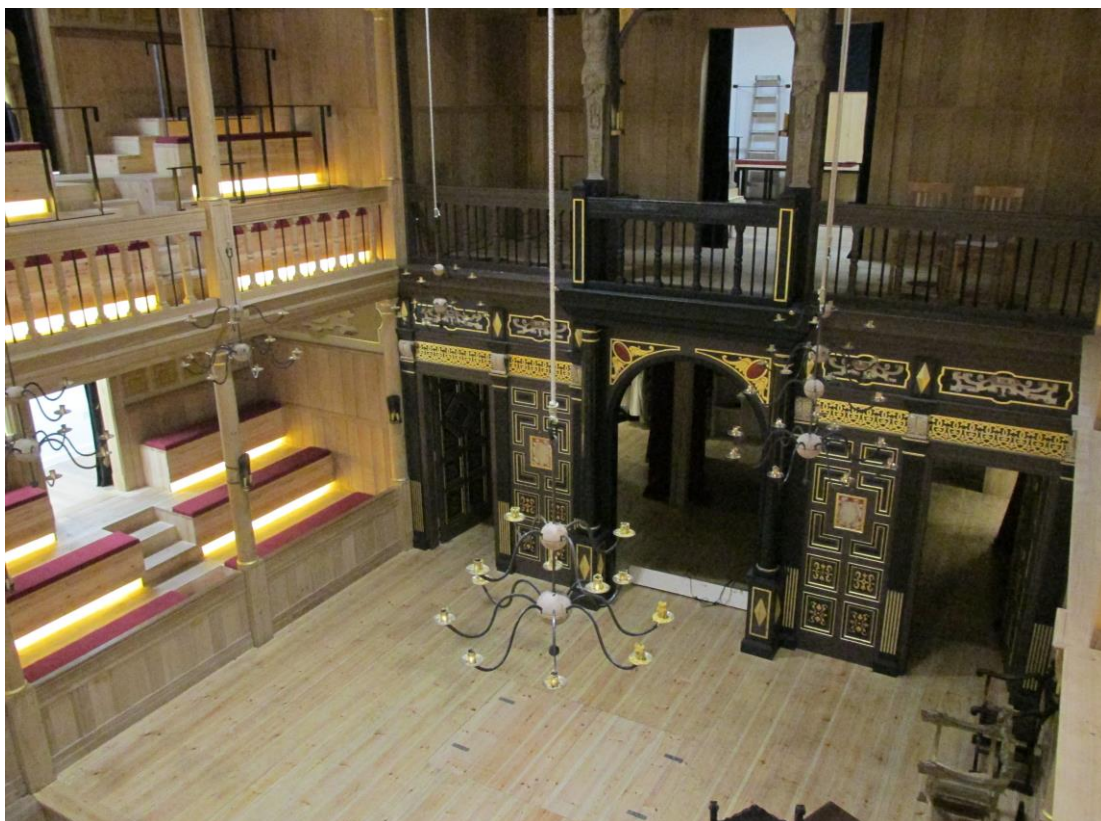
Raising the chandeliers in the SWP intends to make the stage darker, perhaps mirroring an atmospheric change in the play. From our position in the playhouse, however, as the chandeliers rise, our immediate environment brightens, which makes it easier to see the people and objects around us. Although we recognise the raising of the chandeliers as an attempt to darken the stage, we actually experience the practice as an increase in light. We also notice that some of the audience members in the pit and lower gallery follow the trajectory of the chandeliers. In doing so, they might end up looking at us, since we are now bathed in light. When the chandeliers rest in their standard position, we feel somewhat anonymous in the top corner of the SWP. However, when the chandeliers rise towards us, we are suddenly on show, as it were.

Let us shuffle further along the side of the upper gallery and take a seat in the front row for *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (figure 6.2). From this angle, we can certainly see a lot more of the stage,



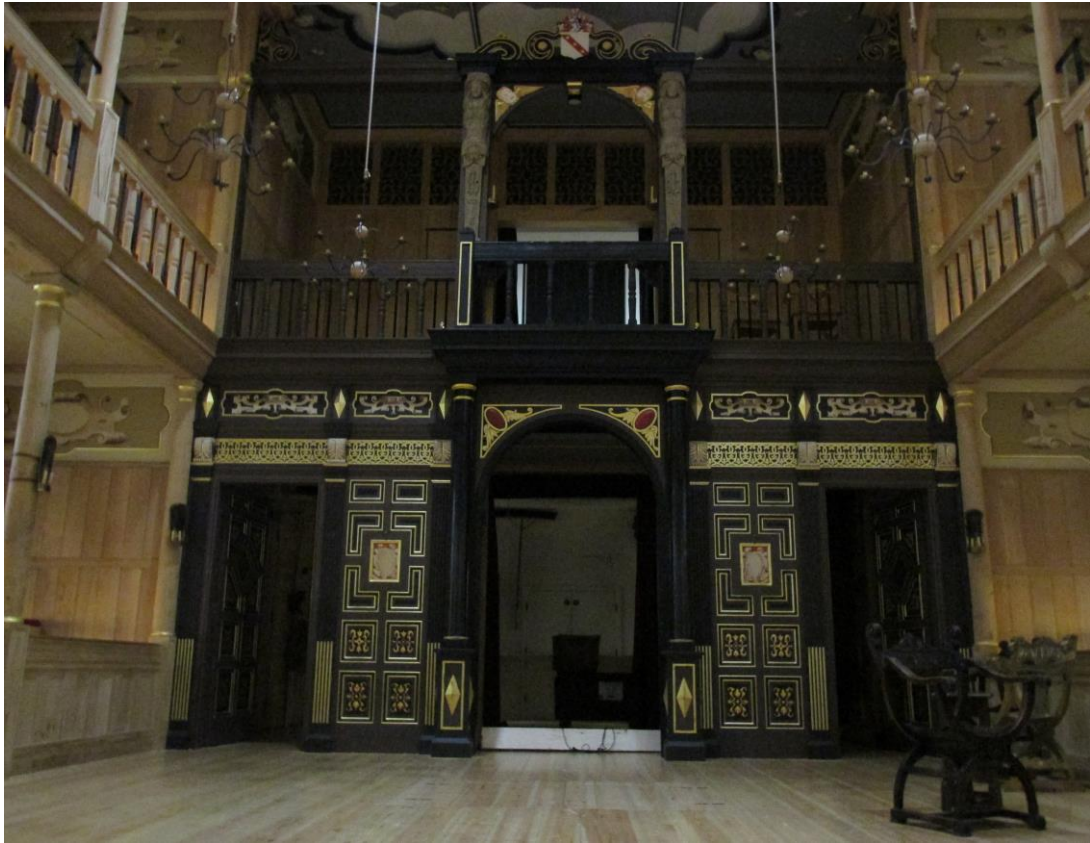


**Figure 6.1:** View from standing positions in upper gallery (chandeliers at standard height) (photo by author)



**Figure 6.2:** View from first row of the side of the upper gallery (photo by author)





**Figure 6.3:** View from the pit (photo by author)



**Figure 6.4:** View from side boxes in lower gallery (photo by author)

but we still have to look through the chandeliers to a certain extent. The chandeliers are raised and lowered quite often throughout the production. Since we are in the front row, when the chandeliers are raised to the ceiling, they rest slightly above us. As the chandeliers rise to the ceiling, we experience a similar phenomenon to the scene from *Thomas Tallis*. That is, light comes towards us and brightens our immediate environment. Not only does this increase in light enable us to see our immediate environment better than before, but we might also feel quite relieved that we can watch the action on stage without having to look through the chandeliers.

Now we will head down to the pit for the performance of *Julius Caesar* (figure 6.3). We are always below the level of the chandeliers when seated in the pit. Very rarely, therefore, is our view obstructed by the candles. Our vision might be obstructed if the action takes place on the stage balcony, but these occasions are usually short-lived. I have already discussed the raising of the chandeliers for the storm scene in the opening act of *Julius Caesar* (1.3), but that was not the only time the practice was used in this production. The chandeliers were raised from their standard position to the ceiling immediately prior to the tent scene with Brutus and Cassius (4.2). From our position in the pit, as the chandeliers rise, our immediate surroundings get darker, including the stage. Whereas we experienced light coming towards us in the upper gallery, lights moves away from us in the pit, which perhaps accentuates the darkening effect. Interestingly, some of us become those audience members who follow the trajectory of the chandeliers as they rise. Perhaps now we gain a greater sense of just how much we were on show during the scene from *Thomas Tallis*. The two actors playing Brutus and Cassius enter with mobile branches. The actors often face one another on stage, which means they are side on to us in the pit. They both hold the branches on the far side of their body (towards the *frons*), which means we do not have to look through the candles in order to see the actors. However, by holding the branches in this position, they illuminate the far side (from our position) of their bodies. Thus, the side of their bodies that faces us is in the shade.

Finally, we will take up our seats in the side boxes of the lower gallery (figure 6.4) for the opening scene from Ben Jonson's *Catiline*, performed during a Research in Action Workshop (July 2014). This scene is particularly interesting because the chandeliers do not rise in unison, like the other scenes, but are staggered over a short period of time. Furthermore, the front chandeliers rise to ceiling prior to the start of the scene, so only four chandeliers remain in the standard position at the opening. When Catiline tells a servant to lock the doors (1.1.35), the middle chandeliers rise to the ceiling. At this point, the characters feel a change in atmosphere:

VARGUNTEIUS: How is't Autronius?  
 AUTRONIUS: Longinus?  
 LONGINUS: Curius?  
 CURIUS: Lecca?  
 VARGUNTEIUS: Feel you nothing?  
 LONGUNIS: A strange, unwonted horror doth invade me;  
                   I know not what it is!

(308–10)

Directly following this exchange stage directions call for “*a darkness comes over the place*” (311.sd). At this point, the back chandeliers rise to the ceiling. Fulvius subsequently notes that “darkness grows more and more” (312).

We are predominantly below the chandeliers when seated in the stage boxes in the lower gallery. As the chandeliers rise in this scene from *Catiline*, we experience light moving away from us, much like we did when seated in the pit, which means our immediate environment becomes darker. However, the darkening effect occurs twice. The raising of the back chandeliers occurs within a minute of the raising of the middle chandeliers, so the temporal gap between these events is not particularly long. However, we certainly feel two atmospheric shifts after the raising of each set of chandeliers. In terms of our experience, therefore, darkness indeed “grows more and more.”

There were certain similarities between our experiences of the scenes from *Julius Caesar* and *Catiline* when seated in the pit and the lower gallery, respectively. In both, the chandeliers moved away from us and our immediate surroundings darkened. Although the stage was darker,

it felt like we could see and be seen more easily. In the scenes from *Thomas Tallis* and *Julius Caesar*, the opposite phenomenon occurred, which more closely resembled the lighting change in the fictional space of the play. Unfortunately I was not able to see each play from various positions in the theatre, but I imagine that the sequential raising of the chandeliers in *Catiline*, for instance, would have been experienced rather differently from the upper gallery, with the audience twice experiencing the sensation of light coming towards them. From this position, it is unlikely that an audience member would have felt “*a darkness com[ing] over the place*” as the stage direction demands. Rather, he or she would have felt their immediate surroundings brighten. What we find is that the lighting practices in the SWP distribute contrasting experiences across the various areas of the playhouse. This uneven distribution is problematic for contemporary directors, who are used to a more universalised experience of lighting practices at modern theatres, in which audience members feel a brightening or darkening effect irrespective of their position within the theatre.

We obviously see the stage from different angles from the various positions in the SWP, which also affects how and what we see. From the pit, the *frons* seems ever-present in any visual experience. From the standing positions in the upper gallery, the stage floor is dominant. From the side boxes in the lower gallery, the audience members directly opposite always take up a large portion of the visual field. While each audience member views different things depending on their position in the SWP, they can only do so because they are immersed in light. Since the resulting experience from the raising of the chandeliers differs between the various areas of the playhouse, then it seems to me that the practice not only changes what people see, but how they see. When the chandeliers rise to the ceiling while we stand in the upper gallery, for example, our responses to the events on stage are affected by our immersion in a brighter environment than before. However, for those sitting in the pit or lower gallery, their experiences are determined by immersion in a darker environment than they previously inhabited. Thus, it is very difficult for this lighting practice to create a universal experience across the entire audience in the playhouse.

### Lowering the Chandeliers

As one can imagine, lowering the chandeliers from the ceiling has the direct opposite effect to the reverse motion of raising the chandeliers. People in the pit and lower gallery feel light coming towards them and their immediate environments get brighter. Audience members in the upper gallery, however, feel light moving away from them and find it more difficult to see their immediate surroundings. The intended effect is obviously to brighten the stage, most likely to represent an atmospheric shift in the action of the play, maybe from nighttime to daytime, or indoors to outdoors. Although the people in the upper gallery might understand what the practice represents, they experience a decrease in light. In this sense, the upper gallery audience members are always immersed in a lighting environment that is at odds with what lighting practices serve to represent. When the chandeliers rise to the ceiling to indicate a dark fictional space, for instance, these audience members feel their immediate environments getting brighter. When the chandeliers are lowered to represent a brighter fictional space, people in the upper gallery feel like it has become darker.

Lowering the chandeliers to the actors' waist level is occasionally employed in SWP productions, particularly for scenes set in private chambers or bedrooms. On most occasions, only one or two chandeliers will be lowered to waist level. Certainly if all the chandeliers are lowered then it significantly decreases the size of the performance space, as the chandeliers occupy the sides of the stage. Moreover, actors must be more aware of their movements, particularly with the proximity of clothing and flames. Lowering one or two chandeliers to waist level seems to have little effect in terms of the overall illumination, especially if the other chandeliers are at their standard height. In fact, when lowered to this height, the chandeliers sit at eye level if one is sitting in the lower gallery, which makes it quite difficult to see through them.

During *The Duchess of Malfi* production at the SWP, one or two chandeliers were occasionally lowered to waist height. In the opening scene, for example, the middle chandeliers were both lowered from standard to waist height for the entrance of Antonio (1.1.353.sd).

Antonio's entrance marks a shift from the public discussion in the first half of the scene to a more private discussion between he and the Duchess. The lowering of the chandeliers, therefore, was an attempt to accentuate this shift from public to private conversation. Later in the play, one of the middle chandeliers was lowered to waist height as the Duchess prepared for bed in her chamber (3.2). Again, the previous scene is set at court, so the lowering of the chandeliers in the SWP production attempted to facilitate a shift from the social world of the court to the intimacy of the Duchess' chamber.

In the *Julius Caesar* production, the lowering of the chandeliers to waist level attempted to engender a shift from public to private space. Immediately following the storm scene in the opening act (1.3), during which the window shutters were closed and chandeliers raised to the ceiling, one of the middle chandeliers was lowered to waist level for the entrance of Brutus. Although Brutus enters his orchard, which is obviously outdoors, this scene is still more private than the preceding one, which takes place outdoors in a public street at nighttime. Thus, the lowering of the chandeliers signified a shift from public street to private residence. For the following scene, in which Caesar enters at home in his nightgown, the lowered chandelier returned to standard height, with the opposite chandelier lowering to waist level. Again, this practice signified a private domestic scene, but the raising of the previously lowered chandelier and the lowering of the opposite chandelier facilitated a location change from Brutus' orchard to Caesar's chamber.

There is little evidence, as far as I am aware, that any early modern productions lowered chandeliers to waist level. Of course, if stage chandeliers were on pulley systems, then it would have been possible to lower the lights to this height. However, doing so would have presented significant problems to early modern playing companies. For one thing, it would have increased the risk of costumes catching fire, especially if the indoor playhouses of the period used the spluttering tallow instead of beeswax candles. I am not sure whether playing companies would have risked damaging their costumes or potentially setting fire to their playhouses. Moreover, the

practice would have reduced the amount of playable space on these stages. As many of these companies were accustomed to performing on the larger outdoor stages, reducing the size of the indoor stage would surely have been avoided as much as possible. Seemingly, the practice of lowering the chandeliers to waist height is a practice developed exclusively in the SWP.

### **Creating Darkness**

Extinguishing the chandeliers and other lighting instruments altogether is another emerging practice at the SWP. *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Thomas Tallis*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and *The Changeling* productions all had scenes which plunged the entire playhouse into darkness. While raising and lowering the chandeliers creates contrasting experiences from different parts of the playhouse, the extinguishing of all the candles creates a somewhat communal experience in comparison. That is, every audience member inhabits darkness, irrespective of his or her position in the SWP auditorium.

Darkening a stage is hardly a new phenomenon in modern theatre, but it is certainly a new development at Shakespeare's Globe. With the outdoor playhouse steeped in the Elizabethan amphitheatre tradition of universal lighting, the SWP offers the opportunity to cast these plays in a new light, or in no light at all for that matter. Yet while dimming electric light from off stage in conventional modern theatres can create darkness, at the SWP, creating darkness is very much an onstage phenomenon. The problem for directors at the SWP is that they must establish how to extinguish the stage chandeliers and sconces without too much disruption to the flow of the play. Moreover, they also have to consider the relighting of the chandeliers for following scenes. Martin White speculates that early modern playing companies used breaks between acts to set lighting for the following act, as I noted in my case study of *Antonio's Revenge* in Chapter 3. However, SWP productions do not have inter-act breaks, with the exception of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* production, which deliberately used inter-acts breaks to perform jigs and songs, rather than to attend to candles or set lighting for the following act. The



interval is generally the only break in the action at the SWP, which means that this fifteen-minute period provides the opportunity to set the stage for the second half of the production. However, I found that although candlelight presented difficulties for creating darkness in the SWP, some of the solutions that directors and actors developed in response produced extremely effective moments of theatre.

The SWP was completely dark for the “dead hand” scene in *The Duchess of Malfi* (4.1). In this case, the chandeliers were extinguished during the interval. In both *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *Thomas Tallis*, the dark scenes occurred immediately before the interval, which allowed the chandeliers to be relit during the break. *The Changeling* opened in darkness with none of the chandeliers lit prior to the start of the play, as I mentioned previously. Thus, for both *The Duchess and Malfi* and *The Changeling*, the relighting of the chandeliers had to be incorporated into the play, whereas for *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *Thomas Tallis*, the extinguishing of chandeliers had to be assimilated into the action.

*The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Changeling* productions found similar solutions to the problem of relighting the chandeliers. Immediately after the “dead hand” scene in the former, four actors sang as they relit the chandeliers, a process that took almost ninety seconds. The song is not in the original text; thus, it was presumably composed especially for this staging practice. Similarly in *The Changeling*, several actors entered to light the candles as musicians played around them; this process took less than a minute. Dominic Dromgoole directed both plays, which perhaps explains the similarities in these practices. Yet, realistically, there are only a handful of solutions to the problem. Perhaps the relighting could take place during a scene, but given the small size of the stage, when the chandeliers are lowered to waist height, it leaves a very narrow playing space. Moreover, the process of lighting the chandeliers risks stealing attention from the action of the play itself.

In *Thomas Tallis* the candles were gradually extinguished over a period of fifteen minutes in order to create darkness in the playhouse. The chandeliers were first lowered from their

standard position to waist level and gradually extinguished as the action took place in the middle of the stage. In the following scene, two actors entered with candle branches and set them at the front of the stage. Attendants also entered with a table that had a candle branch situated in the middle of it. An actor then entered on the stage balcony, illuminated by two sconces attached to the pillars of the balcony. An actress on the stage extinguished the six stage sconces as he spoke above. The actor then exited and extinguished the sconces on the balcony as he left. Thus, the only lights remaining in the playhouse were the candle branches on the stage floor and the table. Singers then entered with candles, at which point the table and branches were removed from the stage. After this song, two actors entered with lanterns, only for one of these actors to exit shortly after, leaving the other actor and the lantern as the only light in the playhouse. The remaining actor soliloquised for a brief period before blowing out the lantern, which left the playhouse completely dark. This darkness signaled the mid-play interval, almost in the same way that abrupt darkness in conventional modern theatre indicates a break in the action. Over the course of fifteen minutes, the SWP had gone from somewhere near its optimal lighting capacity, via the gradual extinguishing of candles, to complete darkness.

The production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* extinguished candles over a shorter period of time than the *Thomas Tallis* production. In the scene immediately prior to the murder of Bergetto, the Friar lectures Annabella on the potential fate of her soul if she continues her incestual relationship with her brother (3.6). The chandeliers were lowered to waist height at the start of this scene, and a bed was thrust onto the stage from the middle doors. The actress playing Annabella knelt at the foot of this bed with a candle branch in front of her, and the Friar loomed over her from behind. Two actresses then entered via the side stage doors, and starting with the front chandeliers and working back, they slowly extinguished each candle in unison. Meanwhile, Annabella and the Friar, flanked by the two actresses extinguishing the candles, continued their fraught meeting. The playhouse gradually darkened, which proportionately matched the growing

intensity of the Friar's speech. As the actresses extinguished the final candle on the back chandeliers, the Friar reached a crescendo—it was an extremely effective piece of dramaturgy.

With the Globe theatre only a matter of steps away from the SWP, the ability to literally darken these early modern plays is an opportunity that most directors refuse to pass up, even if it provides logistical problems. What the scenes from *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Thomas Tallis*, and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* illustrate is that the logistics involved in creating darkness can in fact create extremely effective pieces of theatre. Yet it is important to keep in mind that these are SWP practices and not recreations of any known early modern theatrical conventions. In the final section, therefore, I want to consider the emerging lighting practices of the SWP against the historical evidence for their use in the early modern theatres.

### **Emerging Lighting Practices**

Directors inevitably push the boundaries of lighting in the SWP as these practitioners are schooled in the lighting practices of contemporary theatre. The opening and shutting of window shutters, the raising and lowering of chandeliers, and the extinguishing and relighting of candles are some of the solutions that directors have found to the (present-day) problem of lighting in a predominantly candlelit theatre space. These emerging practices might eventually become established conventions at the SWP, in the same way that certain practices have become conventions at the present-day Globe. Perhaps, then, we can learn more about the future of the current lighting practices at the SWP by considering how emerging practices in the early years of the new Globe eventually became established conventions.

In her work on space and performance, Gay MacAuley notes that the general performance practices at a theatre shape its social significance in contemporary culture:

The [performance] space is, of course, not an empty container but an active agent; it shapes what goes on within it, emits signals about it to the community at large, and is itself affected. The frame constituted by a particular building or venue is not something fixed and immutable but a dynamic and continually evolving social entity. (1999, 41)

The Globe has certainly established a culture of performance since its official opening in 1997, one that is evolving season upon season. A Globe audience has particular expectations about what will occur once inside the theatre, especially if they have attended previous productions. Generally, they expect the actors to come to them, so to speak, and to be more actively involved in the events on stage than in conventional modern theatre. The staging practices at the Globe reinforce these expectations, and what occurs is a mutually reinforcing system of theatrical convention and audience expectations. Most productions at the Globe, for example, will extend or alter the stage in some way in order to make use of the four entrances in the yard. Pauline Kiernan noted that during the first seasons at the Globe, “[d]irectors and actors ... were keen to use the yard as an extension of the playing-space” (1999, 81). This initial desire to utilise the yard during the opening seasons of the Globe eventually developed over the next two decades into an almost universal practice in the theatre. There is little, if any, evidence to suggest that these entrances occurred in the early modern Globe, especially since there would have been almost twice as many spectators. This convention, therefore, illustrates how reconstructed theatres, such as the Globe, create their own sets of practices developed by practitioners, and audiences who inhabit these theatres.

At the Globe, actors are seemingly encouraged by directors to engage directly with the audience by either addressing them in speech or making eye contact. Kiernan observed that “[a] major challenge for actors at the new Globe is to find ways for a character to make contact with the audience without losing contact with the other characters on stage, and without stepping out of the fiction” (1999, 22). Yet it is debatable whether actors on the early modern stage actively sought the attention of the audience. In 1615, for instance, John Stephens described a “common player” as one who, “[w]hen he doth hold conference vpon the stage, and should looke directly in his fellows faces, hee turns about his voice into the assembly for applause-sake, like a Trumpeter in the fields, that shifts places to get an echo” (1615, 297). Stephens implies that more skillful players did not seek the applause of the audience and instead remained focused on their

fellow actors. Although actors on the early modern stage may or may not have engaged directly with the audience, this convention has become an established practice on the new Globe stage.

In the same way that directors and actors wanted to use the yard “as an extension of the playing-space” or directly connect with audience members in the early days of the new Globe, directors and actors in the SWP are keen to explore the possibilities of lighting in the new indoor space. In doing so, they manipulate the lighting materials to their particular end. Whether any of the practices mentioned previously actually occurred in the early modern indoor playhouses is difficult to know, as I discussed in Chapter 2. But certainly, lighting is a different practice for contemporary theatre practitioners than it was for their early modern equivalents, even if the materials in the SWP are informed by historical evidence. A modern director in the SWP, for example, is likely to look at the different lighting materials in the playhouse and think of ways to manipulate these materials to create brightening and darkening effects. Almost every performance I have seen in the SWP so far, either in person or recorded, has experimented with light in some shape or form. The only exception was *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, where lighting remained almost constant throughout. Early modern practitioners surely had less of a preoccupation with lighting than modern practitioners or, at the very least, early modern practitioners viewed lighting differently from their modern counterparts. It is for this reason that Marston’s use of light in *Antonio’s Revenge* at Paul’s playhouse in 1600 stands out as unorthodox: no other plays in late Elizabethan England display a preoccupation with light in the way that Marston’s revenge tragedy does (Case Study 2). Perhaps by the 1630s, lighting had become more integral to the dramaturgy of plays in the period (Case Study 3), but certainly not to the extent that the role of lighting plays in modern theatre.

The lighting materials in the SWP also raise issues that did not exist in the early modern period. The lack of footlights, for instance, in the SWP is problematic for directors and actors who are accustomed to illumination at the front of the stage. In response, an interesting practice has developed in the opening year of the playhouse. On several occasions, across various

performances, handheld lighting instruments, particularly candle branches, were placed at the front of the stage during scenes. The actress playing Portia in *Julius Caesar* knelt in front of a candle branch at one point (4.1). In *The Duchess of Malfi*, the practice occurred regularly. The actors sat in front of a candle branch as Ferdinand reproached the Duchess about her “reputation” (3.2). Later in the production, the Duchess again knelt in front of a candle branch as she came to terms with the perceived death of her husband and children (4.1). Furthermore, before the madmen entered for their song in the following scene (4.2), a branch was placed at the front of the stage. Likewise for the dumb show in *The Changeling* (4.1), several actors entered with candle branches, with one placed at the front of the stage. It is clear, therefore, that although the playhouse lacks permanent footlights, there are easy ways around this problem for contemporary directors.

There is no evidence to suggest that Jacobean indoor playhouses had footlights, or any evidence to say that candles were placed at the front of the stage during the action. Thus, while lighting materials in the SWP might have an historical basis, the ways in which they are used might not. Materials, in this sense, invite us to use them in particular ways based on our embodied history with these things. Merleau-Ponty observes that “[t]he things of the world are not simply neutral *objects* which stand before us for our contemplation. Each one of them symbolises or recalls a particular way of behaving, provoking in us reactions which are either favourable or unfavourable” (2008, 48). Candles, for instance, might evoke ideas of romance and intimacy for modern people. In fact, we only have to look at the number of candle shops in present-day London to realise that these materials have become a commodity rather than a necessity. Yet for early modern people, candles were likely viewed as means to combat the oppressiveness of darkness. I very much doubt that early modern people used candles in order to have a relaxing bath or a romantic meal.

Each lighting material used in the early modern playhouses meant certain things to its audiences. For instance, torches were used outdoors; tapers were often used in bedrooms;

candles in everyday domestic situations. However, on occasions in the SWP, the functionality of a particular lighting instrument is often favoured over its historical significance. Nowhere is this more evident in the use of the candle branch. Apart from torches, candle branches produce the most light of the handheld lighting devices in the SWP. More importantly, they are much easier to carry than torches. As a consequence, the candle branch is by far the most used handheld lighting instrument on the SWP stage to date. Yet there is very little, if any, evidence for such a contraption in the early modern period, as I noted at in the introduction to the second part of this thesis. The candle branch, therefore, has a strange status in the SWP: it looks as if it could have been used in the early modern playhouses as the materials used in its production were accessible in the period. The candle branch is thus very much an SWP creation, invented by modern theatre practitioners in response to the conditions of the playhouse.

The type of character that carried a light on the early modern stage was also highly significant. Rarely do stage directions call for aristocratic characters to enter carrying lights, unless they are performing a task that requires privacy. More often than not, these characters will have attendants carrying lights on stage with them, particularly if it is an outdoor scene. However, on several occasions in the first year of the SWP, aristocratic characters entered carrying some form of lighting instrument. For instance, at no point do the stage directions in original publication of *The Duchess of Malfi* call for Ferdinand or the Duchess to carry lights. The stage directions regularly call for attendants or servants to enter (not necessarily with lights) with both Ferdinand and the Duchess (e.g. 1.1.43.sd; 2.1.108.sd; 3.5.0.sd; 4.1.0.sd). However, in the SWP production, both Ferdinand and the Duchess carried lights on a number of occasions. When Ferdinand visited his sister in her chamber midway through the production (3.2.59.sd), the actor entered with a candle, despite no indication of its use in the original stage directions. Similarly, at the start of the “dead hand” scene, Ferdinand entered the stage carrying a candle, and soon after he exits, the actresses playing the Duchess and Cariola both enter carrying candles (4.1.17.sd). Later in the scene, Ferdinand re-enters carrying a candle (4.1.107.sd).

While directors might be aware of the historical evidence for the lighting instrument in the SWP, naturally they want their audiences to see, and it is this desire that usually takes precedence. Throughout *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* there were several entrances with handheld lights (generally candle branches) in scenes where the action did not call for any light. For the opening production, *The Duchess of Malfi*, there was an extra chandelier positioned at the front of the stage. Subsequent productions dispensed with this chandelier, however, since it made little difference to the overall lighting of the playhouse and simply provided another visual obstacle for the people in the upper gallery. Yet its existence in the first place was born of anxieties on the part of the theatre practitioners involved in the building of the SWP as to whether or not audiences would be able to see well enough in the candlelight.

### **What can SWP Lighting Practices tell us about Early Modern Theatre?**

The first instinct is to say not much, as some scholars have suggested with the reconstructed Globe. Dennis Kennedy was among the first to denounce Shakespeare's Globe as little more than a theme park, aligning Sam Wanamaker with Walt Disney (1998, 183). In a similar vein, W.B. Worthen describes the Globe as "sort of authentic, sort of theme park, tourist dependent, mediated, a Polonian early modern-modernist-postmodern event" (2003, 103). Worthen, however, is less scathing in his analysis than Kennedy as he suggests that the theatrical focus of the Globe distinguishes it from the exclusively consumerist function of theme parks (2003, 97). Having spent a considerable period of time based at Shakespeare's Globe, I know that few scholars, either based at or associated with the theatres, believe that standing in the Globe or sitting in the SWP simply recreates the experiences of early modern audiences. Rather, most of these scholars view the Globe and SWP as a way of opening a dialogue with the past, albeit from a distinctly contemporary perspective. In the final chapter I explore the "Globe Outside In" experiment from 2014, in which two Globe productions were performed for a limited time in the SWP. I suggest that we can start to understand how early modern people came to inhabit their



playhouses by observing how we *make* our way into both the Globe and SWP. This is not to say that we retrace the steps of early modern audiences. Rather, I argue that early modern people also made their way into their playhouses, and through understanding how we come to inhabit the perceptual environments of the Globe and SWP, we can start to map how early modern audiences made their way through their world and into the environments of their playhouses.

The materials of the new Globe and the SWP may be as historically accurate as possible, but they are handled by modern theatre practitioners who come to these materials with preconceived ideas of how they work in the production of theatre. Importantly, early modern theatre practices were not simply material but involved a background network of training and rehearsal that cannot be replicated in modern theatre production. Evelyn B. Tribble, for example, notes:

[Mark] Rylance found that the voices of the boys in their teens did not carry well in the New Globe, but his experience of this tells us little about the effect of the *trained* voice of a boy performing in the early modern period. (2011, 164)

Like their early modern counterparts, modern audiences bring with them a lived history that affects their immediate experience of theatre. Although the audience at the new Globe share light with actors in the same way they did at the original Globe, standing in daylight and the weather has a different embodied history for modern audiences than it did for their early modern counterparts (see Chapter 2).

Even if we designed an exact replica of Shakespeare's theatre(s), performed in the exact same clothing, had the exact same rehearsal techniques and so on, we would still be confronted with the fact that as living beings we inhabit an environment. That is, a theatre is not the sum of its parts, which, when added together, equal a certain experience. Rather theatre must be inhabited in order to be understood. Although the archaeological and material study of the early modern theatres is invaluable, what we bring to these materials emerges from the world that we inhabit on a daily basis, which differs vastly to the one early modern people inhabited. Thus,

archaeological digs and documentary and illustrative evidence tell us what these places were, not what they *were like*.

We could, theoretically, create the exact lighting dimensions of the Blackfriars Playhouse circa 1609, but in order to see in this environment we must inhabit it. In doing so, we cross the threshold between then and now, because how we make our way into this environment differs vastly to the ways in which Shakespeare and his contemporaries made their way into the Blackfriars Playhouse. What may seem dark and cold to us may have been bright and warm for an early modern audience member. We caught a glimpse of this disparity during the SWP lighting workshop I discussed earlier in this chapter. One audience member noted that raising the chandeliers to the ceiling certainly darkened the stage, but the experience was subtle. Yet is the experience only subtle because we are used to more powerful forms of light, especially in a theatre? Would such a change in lighting (if it actually happened) have been subtle for an early modern person who, as I documented in the first part of the thesis, had a radically different daily experience of light? The answers to these questions rest not in the conditions of light itself, but in the way light is inhabited. A modern person's "subtle" is possibly an early modern person's "drastic."

# 5

## The “Globe Outside In” Experiment

In the summer of 2014, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, which both had lengthy runs in the Globe season of that year, were performed in the SWP for one and two nights respectively as part of the “Globe Outside In” experiment. The actors and directors of the respective productions had only one afternoon in the playhouse in order to adapt the outdoor productions for the indoor space. The experiment tested the skills of directors, actors, and audience alike. In what follows, having seen the productions at both the Globe and SWP, I lay out some of my findings from the experiment.

### Comparing the Theatres

During both “Outside In” productions, private—and most often, indoor—scenes were more suited to physical intimacy of the SWP stage than the large Globe stage. The “tent scene” with Brutus and Cassius (*Julius Caesar* 4.2), for instance, benefitted not only from the close proximity of the actors to one another on the indoor stage but also from the decision to raise the chandeliers and shutter the windows immediately prior to the scene. As a result, the low-level candlelight gave greater significance to the handheld lights carried by each actor. Undoubtedly, this lighting configuration added more intimacy to the scene than on the Globe stage.

As Bruce R. Smith shows in his work on sound in the early modern period (1999), the wooden structure of the Globe provides an environment where sound reverberates across the theatre. The same is largely true in the reconstructed Globe, although of course the King’s Men did not have to cope with the background noise of planes and helicopters. Mark Rylance observed, from his experiences of performing during the Prologue Season in 1996, that

“[a]udibility proved not to be a question of volume or even diction, but movement in speech” (1997, 172). Due to the wooden structure, it is possible to speak relatively quietly on the Globe stage and still be heard throughout the amphitheatre.

The SWP retains the same acoustic qualities as the wood in the Globe (English oak), but the roof introduces a vertical dimension to the horizontal across and around sound of the outdoor theatre (Smith 1999, 217). Part of the difficulty for actors trying to adapt from months of rehearsals for, and performances of, an outdoor production to a one-off performance in the SWP is adjusting vocal levels to the vertical acoustic environment of the indoor space. In the *Julius Caesar* production, for example, Antony’s “Friends, Romans, countrymen” (3.2) speech was clearly more suited to the Globe, since the larger space fosters a greater sense of mass congregation. However, I also found the speech somewhat overwhelming in the indoor production because instead of escaping via the roof, sound reflected back into the playhouse created a slight echo. In terms of sound, actors on the indoor stage perform up and down, as well as across and around, the SWP.

The close proximity of actors on the indoor stage can foster a greater sense of intimacy, which was particularly evident in the scenes between Antony and Cleopatra. Yet more expansive scenes, such as public or battle scenes in which several actors enter the playhouse at once, are restricted not only by the physical dimensions of the stage but also by the fewer available entrances to the SWP. The stage extensions employed in Globe productions are almost impossible in the SWP because there is very little room between the stage and the seats in the pit. These seats can be removed—as has been done for some musical events but not as yet for any theatrical events—which may open up the possibility to experiment with the size of the stage. Yet even then, the benefits would be rather insignificant as there is only one entrance into the pit. Furthermore, it is not only the actors’ movements that are restricted in the playhouse, but also the audience. The general elasticity of the Globe yard, with the freedom to roam from your position, is certainly curtailed in the tightly packed and predominantly seated SWP.

As I noted in the previous chapter, most Globe productions employ entrances through the yard. The transition of this convention from the Globe to SWP, however, is fraught with problems. There is only one narrow entrance from the pit in the playhouse, compared to four at the Globe. Since both the *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* Globe productions adapted the stage—with the latter also adapting the *frons*—and regularly used entrances through the yard, the shift to the fewer number of doors in the SWP was highly problematic. As a result, during both “Outside In” productions the pit area was occasionally quite crowded, with actors lining up behind one another.

It is possible to bring several props onto the Globe stage, due to its considerable size, and still maintain a relatively sparse and moveable stage space. However, if an actor brings a chair or a table, for example, onto the indoor stage, it tends to become a focal point because it takes up a greater proportion of the performance space compared to the Globe. For instance, in the final scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Queen entered on a throne. For the Globe production, the throne entered through the middle stage door with large wings attached. The throne was certainly a focal point, but it was still quite easy for the other actors to manoeuvre around it. The indoor production, however, dispensed with the wings—presumably because they could not fit through the middle stage doors—but the throne still took up a much larger proportion of the stage space than during the Globe production, leaving less space for the other actors to move around it.

Once inside the Globe, one can still feel the sense of exterior theatrical space from within the theatre. For example, during another play from the 2014 Globe season, *Titus Andronicus*, prior to the entrance of Titus, drums could often be heard from outside the theatre, most notably in the opening scene. Similarly, when Aaron was taken away prior to his execution, he could be heard laughing from the piazza after he had exited the auditorium. These acoustic events implicitly reminded audience members that theatrical space did not stop at the doors of the theatre, and that at any moment something from the outside could suddenly impinge upon the interior space. In fact, this phenomenon is paradigmatic of the Globe experience, since most

productions employ entrances through the yard. Regular Globe attendees would most likely expect actors to enter from both the stage and yard, and even first-time playgoers would soon realise that the play does not take place solely on the stage. Gay McAuley notes that “[d]ue to the kinds of performance put on, a venue gains a certain reputation within a cultural community; it attracts a certain kind of spectator, repels others” (1999, 41). Regular Globe audience members expect a certain type of performance, one that is not easily transferable to the SWP.

The open roof at the Globe exists as a perpetual reminder of a world outside the theatre, particularly when planes or helicopters pass overhead, or when the London summer takes one of its moody (and wet) turns. The weather is fundamental to sense perception outdoors, as I noted in Chapter 2. There is no doubt that watching a play in the cold and rain is a different experience from watching the same play in warm sunlight. During the afternoon, for instance, the Globe can become quite stuffy as occurred regularly during the run of *Titus Andronicus*. On these occasions, I found myself more aware of the exits and shaded parts of the theatre. My focus was not, therefore, solely on the play itself, but on finding a cooler spot to stand.

The weather not only determines the parameters of perception in the Globe, but it also impacts on the verisimilitude of the fictional action. For example, the third scene of the first act of *Julius Caesar* takes place at night and opens with thunder and lightning signaling the onset of a storm. Actually watching this scene *in* the mid-summer afternoon sun, it is hard not to feel a large disconnect between the perceptual environment that the characters exist in and the actual environment the actors and audience inhabit. However, when this scene takes place *in* a cold and rainy afternoon—which is not uncommon during the London summer—or during the evening, the actors and audience share a relatively similar perceptual environment to the characters. At the Globe, the audience, first and foremost, experience the weather, and it is this initial experience that determines their experience of the things—including the play—in the theatre.

The sense of exterior space is less obvious in the SWP, in contrast to the Globe. Not only is the playhouse covered by a roof, but it is also rigorously sound-proofed—the walls are half a

metre thick, according to Greenfield and McCurdy (2014, 35). Thus, the physical structure of the indoor space eliminates the potential noise and rain that are often the scourge of actors and audiences alike at the Globe. At the SWP, both actors and audiences exist in a more controlled environment, where the outside world is less likely to infringe upon the interior theatrical space than at the outdoor Globe.

Although the sense of exterior space is less obvious in the SWP than in the Globe, the areas immediately outside the indoor playhouse are still used during performances. In fact, if one lingers outside during a production, one will find actors continually coming and going through the foyer area, depending on where their next entrance may be. Although the surrounds of the playhouse are in use during the performance, the awareness of this fact is much less evident inside the SWP than at the Globe. In the case of the *Julius Caesar* indoor production, although the pre-show entertainments remained largely the same, the shift from the events outside to inside the playhouse was less osmotic than in the Globe production. The Globe seemed to simultaneously inhale the playgoers and the energy produced by the pre-show events, meaning that there was no distinct moment that public space became theatrical space. In the indoor production, however, the move from the foyer into the playhouse was marked by the passing of a threshold between *out here* and *in there*.

### **Way-making**

The places outside the theatres at Shakespeare's Globe are there for a reason, and how the public and Globe staff inhabit them is as important to consider as the action that occurs on stage.

Theatres are not simply defined by what exists inside the building, a point that Gay McAuley makes:

Theatre buildings incorporate within themselves indications of the practices they are designed to house: the arrangement of the auditorium and the nature of the other social spaces in the building reveal a great deal about the theatergoing experience from the spectators' point of view; the decoration of these spaces and the way the theatre is signaled as such in the urban space provide insight into the ways in which theatergoing

has been conceptualized in that society; the arrangement of the practitioners' space, particularly the dressing rooms and rehearsal space, the facilities provided, and the amount of space allocated provide information about the work practices involved; the nature of the stage and the fragile boundaries between stage and auditorium, and between stage and offstage, reveal a great deal about the processes of representation involved. (1999, 37)

What happens on a daily basis in the Globe offices, workshop, library, gift shop, rehearsal rooms, stewards' room, and various other staff areas of the complex, all contribute, in certain ways, to what happens inside the theatres. The public spaces in the complex also encompass important signifiers of what to expect inside the Globe and SWP. On the ground floor, for instance, television screens advertise both outdoor and indoor productions. In fact, the breadth of the Globe's public space extends well beyond the complex: from advertisements placed around London, to its website, use of social media, and introduction of the "Globe Player" in 2014. In this sense, the work in both the Globe and the SWP are the culmination of the events that occur in these exterior spaces.

The relationship between what happens in the places (both actual and virtual) that surround the theatres to the events that occur inside is not solely one of cause and effect. Rather, like the theatres, these places are also inhabited in various ways, and these inhabitations do not simply relate to one another, but are *involved* in one another. Tim Ingold argues that places are like "knots" where experience extends beyond the confines of a particular location:

A house, for example, is a place where the lines of its residents are tightly knotted together. But those lines are no more contained within the house than are threads contained within a knot. Rather, they trail beyond it, only to become caught up with other lines in other places, as are threads in other knots. (2011, 149)

When people inhabit either the Globe or the SWP they are, to follow Ingold's analogy, tying a knot with these places. Each audience member may be tightly knotted to the environments of the theatre when they inhabit these spaces, but he or she also has threads leading to knots tied to other environments. Each thread gives us a clue as to how people come to tie themselves to the environment of the theatres; each thread is a "trail," to borrow Ingold's word (2011, 149).

Consequently, I think it is important to explore how people *make* their way into the theatres at



the Globe complex because focusing solely on the environment of both the Globe and the SWP is akin to focusing on the centre of a knot and ignoring the threads of which it consists. By “way-making” I understand the process of getting to one’s destination as creative rather than merely transitional. In order to get somewhere, we must make paths, forge our way through environments that might be familiar or peculiar, but are always affective. Theatres are places that continually affect their inhabitants, as McAuley notes, but these affects are not confined to the “frame” of the theatre building. The “frame” is simply the centre of the knot, but the threads that come together in this centre extend way beyond the theatre itself, along the paths made by its inhabitants in the process of arriving there.

The majority of audience members attending the Globe will either come from the street, through the foyer, into the piazza, then into the theatre, or they will skip the foyer by coming directly into the piazza from the street. For SWP productions, they come from the street, through the foyer, then into the playhouse. We conceive of this process as transporting from one place into another and so on, but what actually happens when we *make* our way through these places? First of all, although we may speak of the street, foyer, piazza and theatre(s) as separate places, we do not experience them as closed environments that we move between. Rather, as we move from street, perhaps *through* foyer, perhaps *through* the piazza, and into the theatre(s), we leave traces of our involvement in each place as well as carry the effects of this involvement into the next place. Way-making occurs because places are not of space but *in* space, continually in flux amidst the mediums of light, sound, and touch (Ingold 2011, 148–52). As each way-maker passes through these places he or she—and the place itself—is changing. This is a point made by Dylan Trigg in his intelligent book, *The Memory of Place*:

Ontologically, the flesh of the world conjoins body and world into the same stuff. Ontically, this conjoinment takes place on an experiential level. Places are felt to be moving in and through the human body, as human bodies are experienced with those same places. (2012, 170)

The idea, therefore, that inhabitants transport across space from place to place has little experiential basis because their bodies are inescapably conjoined to the world through which they pass, and this inhabitation affects subsequent inhabitations. Ingold argues, as a result, that transport is not a passive experience, but is the very thing that *creates* the experience of place:

Perfect transport is impossible for the same reason that one cannot be in two places, nor indeed everywhere, simultaneously. As all travel is movement in real time, a person can never be quite the same, on arrival at a place, as when he set out: some memory of the journey will remain, however attenuated, and will in turn condition his knowledge of the place. [...] We cannot get from one place to another by leap-frogging the world. (2011, 152)

In other words, the journey is as important as the arrival.

If, for example, on a sunny and warm afternoon, I make my way from my desk in the Globe offices, through the piazza, through the foyer and into an empty SWP, I find it quite dark and often slightly cold inside the playhouse. Why? Objectively, it is colder and darker inside the playhouse than the places I have passed through. Yet I do not experience the world objectively. Upon my arrival, I do not consciously construct my experience of the playhouse in comparison to the locations I have passed between, connecting the dots between office and playhouse. Rather, as I move through these places I am *making* my way, leaving and carrying traces of each place as I enter the next one. When we arrive in a place, the journey is “sliced into the pockets of our flesh,” to use Trigg’s words (2012, 118). It is, therefore, darker and colder inside the playhouse because I have made my way through spaces that are brighter and warmer, with my body carrying traces of these movements. Thus, it is the way I have come to inhabit the playhouse—rather than the playhouse itself—that creates the experience of coolness.

“Inhabitants, then, know as they go,” argues Ingold, “as they journey *through* the world *along* paths of travel. Far from being ancillary to the point-to-point collection of data to be passed up for subsequent processing into knowledge, movement is itself the inhabitant’s way of knowing” (2011, 154). Similarly, when audience members move from street to theatre(s) at the Globe, they

make their way through various places, continually creating knowledge that affects their experience of the theatre(s) in which they arrive.

Regular Globe attendees eventually become skillful way-makers, crafting their journeys through the Globe complex like a smith crafts his or her particular skill. If one observes audience members prior to performances, one can often differentiate between those who are skilled way-makers and those who are not. Skilled way-makers move seamlessly through the environment, knowing the exact paths to their destination. They do not need to look at their tickets, search for signs, or ask a steward where to go. Rather, they move through the environment along tightly-knotted paths that have been forged previously. Skilled way-makers at the Globe often have a specific area inside the theatre in mind as their arrival point. If they are groundlings, perhaps they want to be right at the front so they can lean on the stage, or at the back so they can lean against the wall. They perhaps turn up forty-five minutes before the scheduled start, getting to the front of the queue to make sure they reach their desired position. They may know the exact entrance they would like to take into the theatre, or even know what side of the yard to stand in so as to avoid the late afternoon sun. In short, these people know where they are. Ingold notes that “knowing where you are lies not in the establishment of a point-to-point correspondence between the world and its representation, but in the remembering of journeys previously made, and that brought you to the place along the same or different paths” (2000, 237). If people “know as they go,” then they also remember as they go, as their bodies and the environment mingle in familiar ways. For regular Globe playgoers the environment they journey through in order to get into the theatre presents very few obstacles. There is no need to feel anxious prior to the journey; no need to watch their steps once there. Instead, they are at one with the environment, moving effortlessly through it in order to reach their destination.

We can learn much about audiences at the Globe from the fields of tourism studies and social geography. The “performance” of tourism, for example, explores how tourists perform certain actions depending on their physical competence and how they are guided, either by the

architecture or a guide, through a space (e.g. Tim Edensor 2001). Similarly, “place consumption” considers how “places are consumed at least partly, both literally (e.g. consuming products and services at the destination) and symbolically (e.g. consuming meanings attached to a place)” (Rakić and Chambers 2012, 1612). What these studies tell us is that places are not vacant containers which people inhabit as they please. Rather, places invite people to inhabit them in specific ways. These invitations can be overt—such as signs, stewarding, and even lighting—but they can also be implicit within the architecture—such as stairs, doors, and walkways. Depending on my intentions, these places open themselves up to me in specific ways. For instance, if I want to get from the ground floor of the foyer to the piazza outside the Globe theatre, I can only do so by climbing the stairs or taking the lift. The other parts of the foyer—the box office or café, for example—are useless in my endeavour, and recede into my periphery. The stairs and lift, in contrast, are imbued with meaning when it comes to my task, and invite my attention. The next day I may be in the exact same location, but in this instance I am looking for a coffee. Suddenly the stairs and the lift recede into my periphery, and the café invites my attention. Way-making is thus closely aligned to intentionality. Public places also attempt to manipulate people’s intentions as they are carefully designed in order to direct the public to specific areas within them. How often, for instance, do we make our way through a gift shop at the end of a journey through a museum or gallery? Architecture is thus highly manipulative, conditioning and often reducing the possible ways of inhabiting a certain place.

Of course, way-making audience members do not simply start in the street and end in the theatre(s) because as living beings they are always making their way, always coming from someplace else and eventually on their way to somewhere else. Yet when I talk about “out there” and “in here” in the following section, I am talking simply about the Globe complex and the immediate area outside on London’s South Bank because these are the spaces audience members have in common. Where they have come from or where they are going, I do not know. Moreover, when I talk about “out there” and “in here,” I envisage these places from inside the

theatre(s). “Out there” is thus the street, foyer, and piazza. “In here” is inside the Globe or the SWP. In this sense, audience members have already made their way, and knowledge has already been gathered in the movement through the various places of out there. I focus, therefore, on the Globe and SWP not as a point at the end of a line of movement but as a place in the midst of way-making. I recognise that once inside the theatre(s), an audience member is tying him or herself to the immediate place, gradually tightening the knot.

### **Out there and in here**

Entering the SWP from one of the levels of the foyer, one is enclosed within a space that provides no perceptual indicators of its outside surroundings. The foyer is also enclosed, but offers a view of out there through vast glass windows and doors, which, when opened, allow the hubbub of the South Bank to briefly drift inside. Yet after entering the playhouse, the potential perceptual environment is limited to in here, with out there existing only as an embodied memory or imaginative place. At the Globe, in comparison, the perceptual environment extends beyond the confines of wooden structure by incorporating not only in here but also out there, because the open roof allows the day or night sky, sounds nearby, and weather to infiltrate the theatre. It is for this very reason that the Globe creates a unique theatrical experience for its audience, particularly for those situated in the yard, because no matter how hard they may try, the audience can never escape their relationship to the outside world: that is, they are dependent on the sky and air in order to perceive the play.

Moving through the foyer or coming directly from the street, into the piazza, and then into the Globe for a matinee performance is not a particularly jarring experience when it comes to light. Although the foyer has electric lighting, the high glass windows and doors mean that daylight also floods the space. The distinction in light, therefore, between the foyer and the piazza is relatively minimal during the afternoon. Moreover, the light of the piazza and the Globe are virtually the same. Perhaps it is slightly darker inside the theatre, since the steep galleries

restrict light to a certain extent, but in my experience the distinction is relatively minimal. All in all, the process of entering the Globe for a matinee performance is almost continuous from street to theatre in terms of the experience of light.

Evening performances at the Globe are somewhat different. The South Bank is reasonably well-lit at night, it is certainly not as bright as the Globe foyer. Furthermore, the piazza area is quite dark compared to the foyer. For evening performances, the interior of the Globe is illuminated by several electric lights positioned along the entirety of the lower and upper galleries, and along the ceiling of the stage canopy, in an attempt to replicate the shared lighting of afternoon performances. Accordingly, the journey from street to theatre encompasses contrasting lighting environments. Thus, the passing from out there to in here is certainly more marked for an evening performance than during a matinee. However, although light may create a heightened sense of inside and outside space during evening performances, the outside world—via the night sky, slightly heavier air, and drop in temperature—still imposes itself upon the Globe.

As I have mentioned, the perceptual environment of the SWP depends on a separation of in here from out there. Not only is this achieved by the structural design of the playhouse, but also by the experience of light as audience members make their way into the space. Upon entering the playhouse from the foyer, audience members briefly go through an electrically-lit corridor area—whether they are seated in the pit, lower gallery or upper gallery. Seat lighting is always on at this point. In fact, seat lighting is an important indicator of when the play is about to begin in the SWP because once it is turned off, a hush usually sweeps across the playhouse. At the Globe, in comparison, hush usually descends once the actors enter onto the stage. For some productions—such as *Julius Caesar* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (2014–15)—the window shutters may be open; for other productions—such as *Antony and Cleopatra* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (2014)—they are closed. Predominantly, the stage chandeliers, along with the other stage lights—such as the stage sconces—are lit and provide the majority of light, particularly if the

window shutters are closed. The exception to this convention occurred in *The Changeling* (2015), which opened in darkness (after the seat lighting had been turned off).

The shift from daylight or electric light into a space illuminated primarily by candlelight, or a confluence of candlelight and electric light, is always a relatively jarring experience for a number of reasons. First of all, we rarely experience candlelight on such a vast scale in everyday life. Secondly, even with all the candles lit, the shutters open, and seat lighting on, the interior of the playhouse is always darker than the immediate exterior of the playhouse. Finally, the light inside the playhouse is a different colour to the white-ness of electric light as the candlelight creates an orange-tinged lighting environment. There is a major shift, therefore, between the light that an audience member sees in outside the playhouse to the light he or she sees in inside the playhouse. Subsequently, the division between out there and in here is reinforced by the comparative experiences of light outside and inside the SWP.

The osmotic transition from exterior public/theatrical space to interior theatrical space that occurred during the Globe performances of *Julius Caesar* was less smooth at the indoor performance, due to the design and perceptual environment of the SWP. The indoor production certainly took steps to try to diminish the boundary between out there and in here, starting the show with all the shutters open, the chandeliers in their most effective position (2.2 metres above the stage), and ten sconces tied to the pillars of the lower gallery: it was not until the third scene that the shutters were closed. Yet although the playhouse was at its brightest, the kind of light that this configuration produced was different to the light outside the playhouse. Coupled with the fact that the SWP is built to block out the exterior perceptual environment, this contrasting experience of light meant that there was a clear distinction between the pre-show events in the foyer, and the events inside the playhouse. In fact one could argue that for the Globe production these events were not pre-show at all but signaled the start of the play, meaning that the events that took place inside the theatre were just a continuation of the events that occurred outside. This continuation is possible because the design of the Globe necessitates the infiltration of

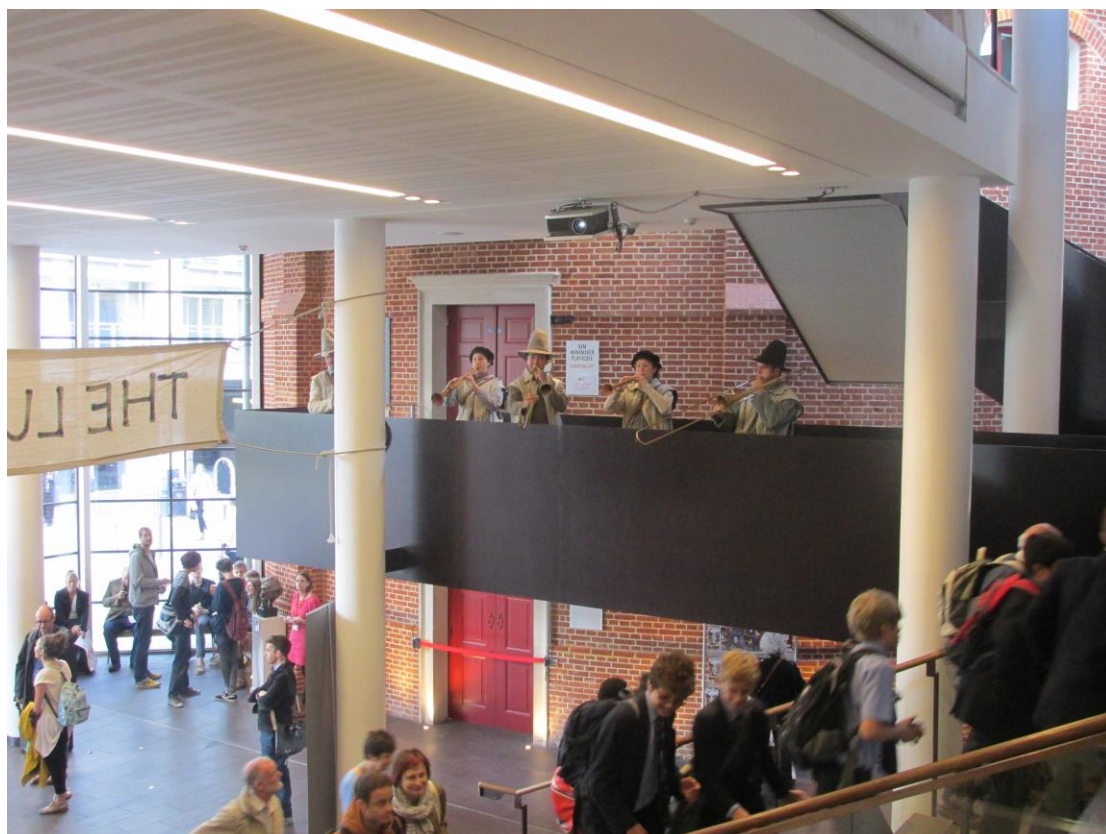
exterior space. The SWP, in comparison, relies on the partition of exterior and interior space, meaning that the continuation of events from outside to inside the playhouse is extremely difficult. It is for this reason that entering the SWP is always marked by passing a threshold from *out there* to *in here*.

### ***Julius Caesar*: Pre-show**

Occasionally productions at the Globe seep into the surrounds of the theatre. The *Julius Caesar* production, for instance, blurred the distinction between public and theatrical space. About thirty minutes before the scheduled start of the show, the foyer and piazza, which normally act as transitional areas between the South Bank and the interior of the theatre, were annexed as theatrical spaces, filled with puppet shows, poetry readings, music, religious rituals, and chanting performed by members of the acting company who later appeared inside the theatre (figure 7). These pre-show entertainments reinforced the atmosphere of the opening scene of the play, in which Flavius and Murellus disperse the commoners from the streets of Rome in order to make way for Caesar and his senators. In doing so, the levity of the previous thirty minutes drained from the theatre and gave Caesar's entrance a heightened sense of importance.

By annexing what is usually public space, the *Julius Caesar* production embraced the axiom that "all the world's a stage." It also highlighted the fact that the experience of playgoing does not simply exist in the temporal space between entering and exiting a theatre. Rather, as Sara Ahmed claims in relation to any subjective experience, "what we may feel depends on the angle of our arrival" (2004, 37). The ways in which audiences make their way into any theatre shapes their subsequent experience. The *Julius Caesar* production, in this sense, attempted to control the angle of the audience's arrival by governing the space through which they entered the theatre. At the Globe, these attempts were largely successful. The structure and perceptual environment of the SWP, however, meant that the angles of arrival created by the pre-show events were distorted once the audience entered the playhouse. The audience initially had to adjust to the strange









**Figure 7:** *Julius Caesar* (2014) Pre-show Events in Globe Foyer and Piazza (Photos by author)

lighting environment and there was no direct connection to the exterior environment in which the pre-show events took place. That is, audience members could not see, hear, or feel the foyer or street because it was shut off from their immediate perceptual environment. The open roof of the Globe, in contrast, enables an audience to connect with the world through which they enter the theatre—they see in daylight, hear in outdoor sound, and feel in outdoor air. Way-making is fundamental to this connection. In leaving and carrying traces from street to Globe, the sky and light the audience see in, the air they feel in, and the sounds they hear in inside the Globe were all embodied reminders of how they made their way into the theatre. At the SWP, in contrast, the light, air, and sound the audience inhabit once inside carries little trace of how they made their way into the playhouse.

The relationship between out there and in here at these theatres is not one of distance between but immersion within. Rather than thinking about the physical or architectural differences between the various places at the Globe complex, and using these findings to construct subjective experience within and between each space, we should consider how people make their way through these spaces, creating knowledge as they go. The relationality of out there and in here is, therefore, a lived relation, one in which audience members are viewed as inhabitants in, rather than constituents of places. By inhabiting the street, foyer, piazza, and theatre(s), audience members are immersed in these places and, as living beings, cannot help but be affected by the mediums—such as light and sound—in which they are immersed. For in Michel Foucault's words, we live in the midst of "space that claws and gnaws at us" (1986, 23). Consequently, the experiences of the pre-show events of *Julius Caesar* once inside the Globe or SWP were as much to do with the lived journey from out there to in here as they were to do with the actual structural differences between the playhouses.

### Light: Outside In

What happens to light when you turn a play outside in? The SWP presents certain challenges to a play produced primarily for the Globe, but it also offers opportunities to cast certain scenes in a different light, so to speak. Interestingly, each production approached light from opposite angles. While *Antony and Cleopatra* adapted the space to the production, *Julius Caesar* adapted the production to the space. As a result, the shows highlighted that the move from outside to in has the potential to produce multiple and equally effective versions of theatrical experience.

The *Antony and Cleopatra* production kept lighting relatively stable throughout the play, perhaps to mirror the lighting environment of the Globe. The window shutters remained closed throughout, chandeliers rarely moved from the standard position, and there were only three entrances with handheld lights in the entire show. By contrast, the *Julius Caesar* production continually experimented with light, using the window shutters, handheld lights, and the chandeliers as means to supplement the fictional action. Dromgoole's production started with the window shutters open and chandeliers in the standard position, meaning that the playhouse was almost at its optimal lighting capacity. At the start of the third scene, in sync with thunder and lightning, the window shutters closed and chandeliers rose to the ceiling, making the playhouse noticeably darker. There is no doubt that this scene was suited to the indoor playhouse, as the discernible change in the perceptible environment mirrored, to a certain extent, the atmospheric change felt by the characters in their fictional environment. The following two scenes contained several entrances with handheld lights until the chandeliers reverted to the standard position and shutters were re-opened for the third act, remaining in this position until the interval. After the interval, the pattern continued. For the "tent scene" between Brutus and Cassius (4.2) the shutters closed and chandeliers rose to the ceiling. The actors each carried a candle branch, which served to accentuate their faces. The branches almost acted as spotlights, with the focus of the scene resting on the proximity of the lights to one another. For the final act, the chandeliers returned to the standard position, although only three window shutters on the lower gallery

opened. Each act had at least one lighting change, and actors regularly entered with handheld lights throughout the production.

In comparison to Dromgoole—who directed the *Julius Caesar* production—the director of the *Antony and Cleopatra* production, Jonathan Munby, had less experience of the intricacies of the playhouse and perhaps felt less comfortable experimenting with light in the space. The initial lighting configuration of *Antony and Cleopatra* consisted of the six chandeliers in their standard position, ten lower-gallery sconces, and four sconces on the back wall of the balcony where the musicians were set up. The seat lighting was on for the opening jig, and the curtains through which the audience entered to their seats were open, allowing electric light to come in from the corridor. Once Demetrius and Philo entered for the opening scene, the seat lighting was turned off and curtains closed. The back chandeliers were raised slightly in order to illuminate Enobarbus and Lepidus on the stage balcony (2.2), but returned to their standard position for the following scene. Apart from Octavia's brief appearance with a candle (2.3), there were no other lighting considerations before the interval. The audience, therefore, inhabited—and presumably, adjusted to—a relatively stable lighting environment for approximately ninety minutes.

The second half of the *Antony and Cleopatra* took place in front of an audience who were more accustomed to candlelight than they were at the start of the evening. Early in the second half, the chandeliers rose slightly above their standard height and remained in this position for approximately thirty-five minutes until the final act, at which point, they returned to the standard position. Although the increases and decreases of light were measurably greater throughout *Julius Caesar*, the subtle lighting changes during *Antony and Cleopatra* had an equally dramatic effect, in my experience. Since the light that I saw in routinely changed during *Julius Caesar*, there was less time to adjust to a certain lighting state than there was during *Antony and Cleopatra*. When the chandeliers returned to the standard position for the final scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*, although they had only moved two feet, it felt like the stage became significantly brighter, much in the same way the opening of the shutters and lowering of the chandeliers did during the *Julius Caesar*

production (3.1). There is no doubt that, objectively, the change in light was much greater in the scene from *Julius Caesar*, but that did not necessarily translate to my subjective experience.

On some occasions in the SWP, the change in the amount of measurable light does not necessarily translate directly into experience of that lighting change. Essentially, the longer we stay in a stable lighting environment—and the more familiar we are with that kind of lighting environment—the more drastic the effect when that environment changes. Just because a play has several entrances with lights, or it displays a possible experimentation with the overall lighting of the playhouse, does not necessarily mean these lighting effects are felt more dramatically than smaller and less frequent lighting changes. The perceptual effects of lighting changes in the SWP very much depend on how each audience member *makes* their way *through* the world to that particular point in time.

### **SWP Intervals**

When I make my way, along with the other audience members, from inside the SWP to the foyer for the interval during any production, I always arrive in a brighter environment than I have inhabited for at least the last hour. Once back inside the playhouse, I make my way into an environment that is both peculiar and familiar. It is peculiar because I have had limited time to acclimatise to the unfamiliar experience of seeing in candlelight. It is familiar, however, in the sense that I have left traces of my previous involvement in this environment—including, sometimes, physical traces, such as my notebook or coat—which, upon my re-arrival, I assimilate back into my present being-in-the-world. Of course, I find it darker in the playhouse because as I make my way back into the place, I carry traces of my fifteen-minute inhabitation in the electrically-lit foyer. This feeling is not as stark, however, as when I first entered the playhouse earlier in the evening, as I shall explain shortly. To a certain extent, in terms of perception, I eventually pick up where I left off. I, therefore, *re-make* my way into the playhouse, embarking on a journey that is more familiar to me now than it was when I first made it.

Having made this journey from SWP to foyer and back several times, it is more familiar to me than it is for first-time audience members. This is not to say, however, that the journey is always the same. Trigg notes, for instance, that “[t]he journeys we repeat daily alter in their spatiotemporality owing to the mood and objects of intentionality we find ourselves immersed in” (2012, 5). He observes that if we are running late then our arrival place feels far away. Yet if we are running on time, distance recedes. Each time I come out of the playhouse into the foyer, or every time I make my way from my desk into the playhouse, I am making a journey that is both familiar and unique: it is familiar because I know how to make my way there; unique because I am making my way for a specific reason that is unique to that point in time. There is no doubt, however, that I am more acclimatised to coming out of the candlelight of the SWP into the bright naturally- or electrically-illuminated foyer than a first-time playgoer because my body retains traces of my previous journeys through these places. Although the intention of my journey may differ each time, my previous experiences of way-making through this environment are etched into my present bodily movements.

For first-time visitors, the initial entrance to the SWP transforms the space from an abstract place into an intimate and immediate environment. For anthropologist Michael Jackson, this phenomenon is a common human experience:

You turn off a desert track, drive across spinifex, bumping over the rough ground toward a desert oak, stop the vehicle, get out, build a fire, boil a billy, lay out your swags, and within half an hour an area that had no prior or particularly personal associations begins to take on meanings that are uniquely yours. Everything you do and say and feel in that place intensifies the almost proprietorial sense that you and the place are now inextricably linked. This transformation, whereby something we think of as impersonal and other—as an “it”—becomes something we experience as personal—as “ours”—is one of the miracles of human life. (2013, xiv)

Although I am yet to see audience members build a fire or lay out their swags in the SWP, they undergo a similar experience to the outback traveler. When they first enter the playhouse it transforms from *in there* to *in here*: it becomes something personal. Each member eventually makes the place his or her own and, as a result, it forever loses its impersonality. Trigg argues that

“the accentuated ‘in’ with *in*-habiting attests to the development interplay between ourselves and the places we find ourselves” (2012, 10; original emphasis). Thus, when the first-time playgoer returns to the playhouse after the interval he or she is not entering the place anew; rather, he or she is returning to a space that was previously *his* or *hers* because, as Jackson notes, “[t]hat which has been ... always leaves a trace” (2013, xv). In mingling with the environment, we take ownership of it at the same time as it possesses our body. These syntheses eventually fade into memory, but they re-emerge as we re-make our way through previously inhabited environments. The more we re-make our way, the more we make a specific environment ours. It is by re-making in this way that we become *skilled* way-makers.

The SWP, by contrast to the Globe, is a relatively unknown entity, and the expectations of its audience are presumably less concrete than that of the Globe’s. Importantly, expectations are not simply based on what conventions people expect to see or hear in the playhouse. Rather, they expect to *feel* a certain way. For example, even if audience members have never been to the Globe before, it is possible, and perhaps likely, that they would know about the fact that they will be outdoors once inside the theatre. Accordingly, they might bring their sunglasses, or, if they are going to stand in the yard, they might have prudently packed raincoats. These decisions have little to do with performance techniques, and more to do with self-preservation; they pre-empt experiences to come, based on previous experiences of being outdoors, and possibly having attended a performance at the Globe previously. Although an audience may be aware that the SWP is predominantly illuminated by candlelight—which is certainly not a guarantee as I discovered in my audience interviews—their expectations of how they will feel inside the playhouse are certainly less established than at the Globe. Moreover, since seeing *in* candlelight is a relatively uncommon experience—especially compared to seeing outdoors—the audience have few previous experiences to fall back on. As the SWP establishes its culture of performance as well as its perceptual culture (e.g. temperature, light, sound), the expectations of its audience will eventually become more stable.



### Findings from the Experiment

Although the “Globe Outside In” experiment tells us little about how early modern dramatists, actors, and audiences actually experienced the transition from outdoor to indoor playing, its lessons are still invaluable. In the same way that my experiences of the *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* productions depended on the contrasting ways in which I came to inhabit the environment of the SWP, the experience of early modern audiences was also determined by how they *made* their way into the different indoor playhouses in the period. The comparative relationship of “out there” to “in here” between the outdoor and indoor theatres at Shakespeare’s Globe would also have been an early modern phenomenon. What sense of immediate exterior space did early modern audiences have at the Blackfriars, for instance? Could they hear, see, or feel the outside world more than an audience at the sound-proofed and windowless SWP? Did they expect to be able to hear, see, or feel the outside world when indoors? If they did, then how did that affect their inhabitation of the environment?

The experiment also proves that, in Smith’s words, “the play’s not the thing” (2012, 37–45). It is fair to say, for instance, upon reading the playtexts and stage directions, that the early modern productions of *The Duchess of Malfi* experimented more with light than *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, but what does that actually mean in terms of experience? Dromgoole’s *Julius Caesar* certainly experimented more with light than Munby’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, but, as I argued, that did not necessarily mean the former had more dramatic experiences of light than the latter. It was how I inhabited light during these performances that determined my experiences of brightness and darkness accordingly. Of course, this is not to say that audience members experienced the same feeling as I did as their experiences depended on how they made their way to that point in time. Yet my experience does tell us that early modern audience members were similarly dependent on how they came to inhabit the playhouses in which they watched these plays. A playtext can tell us only so much about the material conditions of performance; it cannot tell us

how early modern people made their way into these conditions and how they inhabited them upon their arrival.

Although the experiment was exciting for scholars, since all we had to do was turn up and watch, I imagine it was less so for directors and actors. Having rehearsed for months for an outdoor production in a much larger theatre and all that entails—including the precision of vocals, sightlines, and movements, not to mention freedom from the fear of catching fire—the move indoors to the SWP presented considerable challenges. Yet there were very few instances when these challenges seemed burdensome. On occasions, vocals were slightly too loud, and actors were sometimes wary of their step as they entered from the pit onto the stage, but ultimately, we learned that contemporary actors and directors are extremely adaptable and skillful when presented with a challenge such as this one. In particular, by shifting indoors, the actors suddenly had to consider lighting in a way that they did not on the Globe stage. Whereas in conventional contemporary theatre, an offstage technician controls the lighting, in the SWP, the actors are often their own lighting designer. Carrying various handheld lighting utensils, all with extinguishable flames, adds more responsibility to their roles. By the end of the “tent scene” in *Julius Caesar*, for example, the actor playing Brutus only had one candle still burning on his four-canded branch. Presumably with more technical rehearsal time in the playhouse, actors would become more accustomed to performing with these utensils and would thus be less likely to accidentally extinguish their flames.

Most significantly, the “Outside In” experiment demonstrates that we cannot simply recreate the material conditions of early modern playgoing, particularly when it comes to light, in order to recreate early modern theatrical experience. If my immersion in light determined my visual field in both the Globe and SWP, then we can certainly conclude that what people saw in the early modern amphitheatres and indoor playhouses was similarly determined by their immersion in light. We should not start from what people saw and work our way outwards towards perception, drawing a neat line between observed and observer as early modern

opticians tended to do with rays of light. Rather, we should think about how people saw in light, how it engulfed their visual world, and how they came to make certain lighting environments their own.

# Conclusion

## Conversing with the Past

To be alive is to enjoy the light, enjoy the support of the ground, the open paths and buoyancy of the air.

— Alphonso Lingis (1998, 17)

Throughout this thesis I have argued for an approach to light that incorporates not simply the material world of lighting but also the phenomenal experience of being-in-light. Crucially, materiality and ontology are not distinct areas of study but inextricably linked in any examination of human behaviour. In fact, being-in-the-world conditions the things that we come to experience. Ingold argues, for instance:

Rather than thinking of ourselves only as observers, picking our way around the objects lying about on the ground of a ready-formed world, we must imagine ourselves in the first place as participants, each immersed with the whole of our being in the currents of a world-in-formation: in the sunlight we see in, the rain we hear in and the wind we feel in. Participation is not opposed to observation but is a condition for it, just as light is a condition for seeing things, sounds for hearing them, and feeling for touching them. (2011, 129)

In this sense, to participate in the world is to be alive and to “enjoy” the fluidity of the environment in which we are immersed, as Lingis observes in the epigraph to this conclusion. Of course, it is one thing to participate in a world that we are actually part of; it is another to participate in one that existed four hundred years ago. Yet if we are truly to understand what things were like for Shakespeare and his contemporaries, we must try.

In a recent article, Bruce R. Smith (2012) observes an “unspoken phenomophobia” in contemporary literary criticism. He asks, “[w]hy ... should attention to physical, psychological, and social circumstances of interpretation produce so much anxiety?” (480). Part of the anxiety, Smith suggests, is a fear of the inherent “first-personhood” of any phenomenological analysis,

especially in light of object-orientated social subjects constructed by New Historicism and cultural materialism. “If New Historicism began with Stephen Greenblatt’s desire to speak with the dead,” writes Smith, “phenomenology might be said to begin with a desire to *feel* with the dead” (481). Light, I argue, is an apposite starting point in “a desire to *feel* with the dead” because light (and darkness) is a fundamental aspect of any world of feeling: that is, the environment.

When early modern people felt anxious at nighttime, these feelings emerged from their immersion in a darkness that underwrote their capacities to see and feel as they did during the day (Chapter 1). Similarly, what people witnessed on the stages of the various early modern playhouses surfaced from their inhabitation in either the weather-worlds of the amphitheatres or the daylight and candlelight of the indoor playhouses (Chapter 2). In manipulating the lighting environments at the indoor playhouses, by the entrances and exits of light on stage, or perhaps even extinguishing candles, playing companies were not altering the shape of the things that audiences witnessed on stage but changing *how* audiences came to see these things (Chapter 3). In all these examples, early modern people participated in environments of light. In doing so, they saw the world from their particular point of view at that specific moment in time. These visual experiences were also informed by a history of inhabiting daylight, candlelight, and darkness on a daily basis.

Modern audiences at the Globe and Sam Wanamaker Playhouse also see things from their particular point in space and time (Chapter 4 & 5). These visual experiences are conditioned by an embodied history of inhabiting electric light. The orange lighting environment (and the colours it produces) of the candlelit SWP, for instance, is a novelty for audience members in present-day London. Yet an early modern person must have been accustomed to seeing things in an orange-tinged light on a regular basis. Whereas the colours this orange light brings about seem quite peculiar for modern audiences in the SWP, these colours must have been quite normal for early modern people. Thus, when audiences inhabit the light of the SWP, their relationship to early modern audiences at the Blackfriars or Cockpit playhouse is not defined by similarities but

differences. These differences need not derail theatre reconstructions or original practices projects. In fact, these differences are precisely how we can open up a dialogue with the past and “feel with the dead,” to use Smith’s words.

For example, the contrasting experiences of light from the various seating locations in the SWP, as discussed in Chapter 4, can help us think about similar effects in the early modern playhouses. Surely an audience member’s visual experience in the Jacobean Blackfriars also depended on his or her respective position to light in the playhouse. It seems likely that the lighting techniques discussed in Chapter 3 distributed contrasting experiences across the Blackfriars, Paul’s Playhouse, and the Cockpit, respectively, like the distribution of lighting practices at the SWP. In the scene discussed from *The Duchess of Malfi* (4.1), for example, an audience member in the upper gallery at the Blackfriars may have been able to see from above the stage that Ferdinand had given the Duchess a dead hand, particularly if the chandeliers were raised towards him or her. In the pit, however, an audience member may have had difficulty seeing exactly what was happening. Similarly, the varying lighting levels experienced through the continual entrances and exits of the Pages in the third act of *Antonio’s Revenge* would presumably have differed from the various seating locations in Paul’s Playhouse. If the chandeliers were raised, then it is likely that members in the upper gallery would have felt less of a drop in light when the Pages exited than the audience seated in the pit, or vice versa, if the chandeliers remained in the standard position. The symbolic lighting in the final act of *Wit Without Money*, in which the stage is bisected into light and dark depending on the respective knowledge of the characters, would have looked quite different from the various areas of the Cockpit playhouse. From the pit or proscenium seating, the stage would have been split from left to right. But from the side galleries, the stage would have been split from top to bottom. It is important, therefore, to think of early modern lighting practices as segregating rather than uniting audience members, depending on their respective positions with regards to light in the playhouse.

Perhaps early modern dramatists and playing companies were more aware of the

diversifying effects of lighting than any modern theatre practitioner or scholar accustomed to the more universal effects of modern theatre lighting. Perhaps early modern theatre practitioners saw potential in creating contrasting experiences across the playhouse. It is important that we analyse the potential perceptual environments of the early modern playhouses through the same lens as we examine contemporary theatre reconstructions like the SWP. The early modern theatres were also dynamic and eclectic spaces, where audience response could not be predicted in advance, but rather enfolded in real time amidst the fluctuations of the perceptual environment. Lighting practices at the early modern indoor playhouses were not aimed at making each audience member see the same thing. Rather, these practices placed each audience member *in* light in various, and often contrasting, ways. Thus, the visual experiences of early modern audiences, like their modern equivalents, emerged from their being-in-light, an immersion that surely varied from one part of the playhouse to the other.

Through understanding how we inhabit the world, which includes our daily habitats and not simply theatres, we can converse with early modern people by pointing out the differences between our life and theirs. “Phenomophobia” seems to hinder such an endeavor, however, by neglecting the benefits of “first-personhood” in the study of historical experience. We should listen to Smith when he says, “[f]ear not Merleau-Ponty” (2012, 483). I hope this thesis illustrates that the work of contemporary theorists, such as Merleau-Ponty and Ingold, can illuminate the material evidence left behind by historical peoples in ways that can give us a better understanding of what it might have been like to inhabit past environments. Light offers us one, but not the only, way of opening up a dialogue with the past.

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